

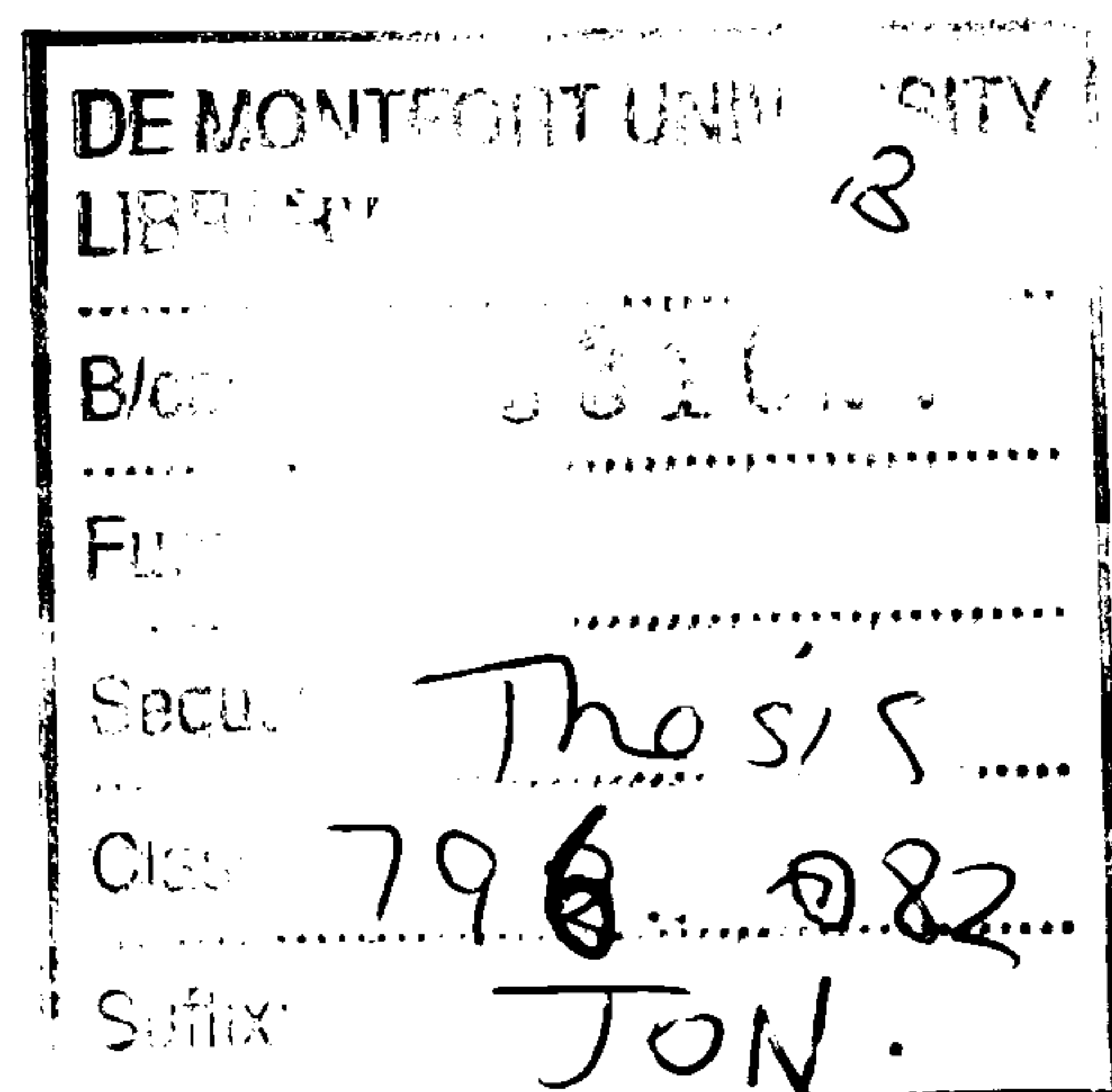
From subcultures to social worlds: women in sport,
women in triathlon.

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Amanda Jones

De Montfort University, Bedford

June 2004



List of Contents

Abstract	
Acknowledgements	
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework	8
<i>Introduction</i>	
<i>Poststructural theories</i>	11
<i>Poststructural feminisms</i>	13
<i>Language</i>	15
<i>Discourse</i>	19
<i>Power, resistance, and freedom</i>	20
<i>Knowledge and truth</i>	23
<i>The subject</i>	25
<i>Poststructural feminisms and sport</i>	27
Chapter Three: Bodies that matter in triathlon	30
<i>Introduction</i>	
<i>Discourses of femininity</i>	31
<i>Gender performativity and how bodies matter (Butler 1993)</i>	33
<i>The Gender Game - Embodying power through play and sport</i>	36
<i>'The Female Athlete Triad'-a culture bound syndrome</i>	39
<i>The materialisation of the 'anorexic' body as a mental illness</i>	40
<i>The materialisation of 'unbearable weight' (Bordo 1993)</i>	41
<i>Lean mean and faster : going, going Gone</i>	43
Chapter Four: Methodology	49
<i>Introduction</i>	
<i>Subcultural theory</i>	51
<i>Existing histories of sporting 'subcultures'</i>	51
<i>Social signs of style</i>	53
<i>The Post-subculturalists</i>	54
<i>Feminist research approaches</i>	56
<i>The selection a research paradigm</i>	56
<i>A postructural feminist research paradigm</i>	58
<i>Ethnographic research</i>	64
<i>What is ethnography?</i>	64
<i>Contemporary feminist ethnography</i>	66
<i>Reflexivity in the feminist research process</i>	69
<i>Pre-fieldwork phase</i>	70
<i>Verbal access</i>	71
<i>The practice scenario</i>	73
<i>Practical access</i>	73
<i>What is data?</i>	76
<i>Research diary and field notes</i>	77
<i>First and Second interview phases</i>	79
<i>Introducing the participants</i>	79
<i>Informal woman to woman interviews</i>	81
<i>The women's personal diaries</i>	84
<i>Ethical considerations</i>	86
<i>To deceive or not to deceive- complete observer or complete participant?</i>	86
<i>Anonymity</i>	88
<i>Confidentiality</i>	88
<i>Semi-covert listening and taking notes</i>	89

<i>An overt researcher – guided conversations</i>	90
Feminist analysis of ethnographic data	90
The writing: gender, power and representation	93
Chapter Five: The construction of triathlon histories	96
<i>Discourse; knowledges and truths in the BTA</i>	99
<i>Power, resistance and freedoms in the BTA</i>	100
<i>The formal construction of language in triathlon</i>	107
<i>The triathlon club</i>	110
<i>The club's formal construction of discourse; knowledges and truths</i>	111
<i>The Committee</i>	114
<i>Power resistance and freedoms in the formally expressed discourses of the club</i>	116
<i>The e-group</i>	123
<i>The club newsletter</i>	124
Chapter Six: The subjectivities of the women's social worlds; discourse; power, resistance and freedom; knowledges and truths	128
<i>The women's stories</i>	
<i>Martha's story, scene one</i>	128
<i>Harriet's story, scene one</i>	132
<i>Jackie's story scene one</i>	133
<i>Claire's story, scene one</i>	137
<i>Trish's story, scene one</i>	138
<i>Sharon's story, scene one</i>	141
<i>Tina's story, scene one</i>	145
<i>Paula's story, scene one</i>	147
<i>Sandy's story, scene one</i>	148
<i>Coach's story, scene one</i>	150
<i>Louise's story, scene one</i>	151
<i>Betty's story, scene one</i>	153
<i>Deirdre's story, scene one</i>	156
<i>Scene one, the collective stories</i>	157
<i>Why triathlon? What are the discourses that the women recognise in triathlon?</i>	159
<i>Why the triathlon club?</i>	164
<i>The women's social worlds and their embodied subjectivities</i>	166
<i>The effect of injury on the woman's subjectivities</i>	176
<i>The subject positioning of novices in the club</i>	179
<i>Woman's technologies of the self</i>	185
Chapter Seven: Triathlon as a space for women's technologies of the self	187
<i>Cultural practices and the maintenance of subjectivities in triathlon</i>	187
<i>Equipment, clothing and fashion in triathlon</i>	188
<i>The discourses of performance and attainment: 'train, eat, work, train, eat, sleep'</i>	196
Chapter Eight: Conclusion	214
Bibliography	218
Appendix 1: <i>Informed consent form</i>	1
Appendix 2: <i>The Club Committee 2001,2000, 1999, 1998</i>	2
Appendix 3: <i>Sandy's social worlds, April 2000</i>	5
Appendix 4: <i>Martha's social worlds, February 1999, May 2000</i>	6
Appendix 5: <i>Paula's verbal explanation of her social worlds</i>	10
Appendix 6: <i>Harriet's social worlds, 1995-1996, 1999</i>	11

Appendix 7:	<i>Jackie’s social worlds</i>	13
Appendix 8:	<i>Individual subjectivities</i>	14
List of Tables		
Table 1:	<i>The research timetable as fluid guideline</i>	70
Table 2:	<i>The club membership taken at the start of each season (April)</i>	112
Table 3:	<i>The committee</i>	114
List of figures		
Figure 1	<i>The layout of chairs before the meeting</i>	118
Figure 2	<i>The layout of chairs at the start and during the meeting</i>	118

Acknowledgements

*I dedicate this thesis
to my father, Michael - thank-you for your unconditional support which has
enabled me to realise this ambition,
and
to Kyle, for being so positive ... I can now play more!*

*My thanks and appreciation goes to Roger Strangwick - thanks for all you
invaluable help,
and to
Dr Joyce Sherlock who has always believed in me. Thank-you for all your
encouragement and support, on this empowering journey, it has been an
honour to work with you.*

Chapter One: Introduction

Like many other feminist research projects (Flintoff 1997), mine grew from the links I began to make several years ago between my experiences and concerns as an elite sportswoman, and my own developing understanding of, and commitment to, feminisms through my Masters of Arts (MA) programme. The study was inspired by the life stories of two triathletes, both of whom had developed osteoporosis. One, although under 30, had low bone density equivalent to that of a 90-year-old woman. Karen said:

I am frightened that I have ruined my life ... It was good at the time and it seemed harmless. No one is to blame, because nobody knew of the consequences. ... I want to stop it happening to other young women ... If ritualistic behaviour patterns are learned and not innate then it would be possible to prevent them. ... but how?

Both women clearly wanted explanations of their osteoporosis, which they believed, had in no small part resulted from various ritualistic patterns of behaviour. They were determined that their voices be heard in order to alert fellow sportswomen that the marketing slogan sport is good for you is not always true. Their stories inspired me to examine the discourses related to the political and cultural practices of triathlete women and the sociology of women's health. This research analyses culture as the significant focus. I decided the best way forward was to start with the culture of a triathlon club, to study a group who already had a cultural identity with the aim of examining the discourses related to women's cultural and political practices.

This thesis draws upon evidence from a three-year feminist ethnography in which I studied a triathlon club in the south of England. Through a feminist ethnographic lens I aimed to examine the culture that women triathletes inhabit in order to understand the everyday social construction of, and the impact of, sporting experience on the participants' lives and subjectivities. Feminists such as Scruton and Flintoff (2002), Wright (1995), Adams St. Pierre (2000) and Markula (1995, 2003) informed my research. In my research design I gave voice to, listened to and observed women in the triathlon club to see whether, as triathletes, their subjectivities were constructed, confirmed or constrained, or empowered by discourses associated with their embodied cultural practices. I analyse how, as a subject, the sportswoman is active in the negotiation of discursive practices, challenging, or transforming herself whilst creating new agency for her body.

The literature reveals a paucity of empirical studies on women's sporting subcultures in Britain. Existing research that addresses women's participation in triathlon has not engaged with social issues. Sport is marketed forcefully as a good thing, physically employing the symbolism of women's empowerment through the text of the toned athletic sexy female body. There is, however, little social research that considers the consequences for women's health when the discourse of performance shifts from sport is healthy to sport is unhealthy. In the sociology of sport, rarely are the discourses operating in competitive sport questioned, and little research has been conducted on the specific discourses of performance in particular sports arenas. It is not known exactly what the relationships of the discourses of performance of sport are to the discourses of health. Some women push themselves hard physically, thus reproducing rather than challenging discourses of performance, and continue to do so even after they are aware of discourses of health that may not be life-enhancing (for example low bone density).

I acknowledge that feminisms include a wide range of positions and analyses. Although poststructural feminisms were found to offer conceptualisations that suited this work, they are not exclusive viewpoints that ignore earlier feminisms. It would be more accurate to say that my study reflects a number of feminist positions, the common thread being a fundamental commitment to empower sportswomen's lives. The thesis specifically draws upon the work of feminists who have shown how Foucault's conceptualisations of power share some important insights with feminist theory (Bartky (1988), Butler (1990, 1992, 1993), Bordo (1993); Scraton and Flintoff (2002), Wright (1996), Adams St Pierre (2000), Flintoff (1997) and Francis (2002)). Drawing upon these ideas I explore the triathlon club as a web of culturally constructed power relations (of which gender power relations is a part) which ensures the maintenance of certain dominant discourses over others. While there may be little new in the claim that interrelationships between men and women are constructed by power, there is no evidence to support this claim in the context of research on triathlon. It is not just a coincidence that the interests of those whose voices are heard the loudest in sport, triathlon, and the triathlon club, are served by the maintenance of biological, physiological, medical, scientific, historical, cultural and symbolic, discourses. My work recognises that the woman has agency to challenge physically cultural boundaries.

For ease of discussion I use headings such as language; discourses; power, resistance and freedom, knowledges and truths; and the subject (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.506). I reflect upon how valuable these conceptualisations can be for sport feminisms, and in

particular for my own research when analysing how discourses construct, confirm and constrain; or challenge, resist and transform gender power relations in sport.

Our bodies are materialised by the discourse of normalisation, and how we use them is governed by gender performativity (Butler 1990, 1993). Individual subjectivities *are* gendered but also multifaceted, and an integral part of understanding the multiplicity of masculinities and femininities. In this study I argue for multiple femininities which can be experienced both between women, and by individual women as diverse subjectivities (Butler 1990).

When faced with deciding upon a research methodology that would best suit the setting I asked myself; what feminist knowledges do we need in sport? In the triathlon club how can alternate knowledges be used to bring about change in women's lives for the better? I initially looked at the theorisation of a group through subcultural analysis, however, this approach proved limiting. The aims of my study demanded a more flexible and reflexive approach for individual women. Studies of culture have often utilised ethnographic methods, and this directed me towards a feminist ethnographic methodology.

I was interested in understanding what were the knowledges and truths of the individual women triathletes. I use Foucault's work to challenge the notions of expert power, the appropriation of voice, and ownership of the research product. Reflexivity and the emergence of themes are integral foci of the research process. Data were collected from participant observation, in-depth interviews diaries and drawings. Data comprised of both formally expressed discourses (documentation, e-mails, club newsletter) and informally expressed discourses (conversations, interviews).

The purpose of this research is to understand the manifestation of consciousness in triathlon culture and the everyday lives of women triathletes. One of the aims of my study is to analyse the wider discursive practices that surround triathlon by giving women voice and focusing on each woman's subjective feelings about, and experiences of, language; power, resistance, freedom; knowledges and truths in their particular social and cultural worlds. I aim to understand how discourses are internalised and act upon individual women as subjects through political and embodied cultural practices. How do the discourses of performance impact on discourses of health? When triathletes talk about living a healthy lifestyle what does this mean in terms of cultural practice?

Reinharz (1992) suggests that a feminist perspective on data analysis involves many components. These include understanding women in their social context, and using

women's language and behaviour to analyse the relationship between self and context. My study involved collecting data from swimming pools, changing rooms, training, social events and races. Coding is the organisation of data into manageable categories. In my study I analysed the data using open coding. This involved reading, contemplation and re-reading of my research and participant observation diaries, to make sense of what I saw, and what participants and other players said. Developing and pursuing emerging themes should be an integral element of feminist ethnographic research and is not a distinct part of the process. In practice, however, emergent themes were difficult to code precisely under one heading and there were many overlaps.

I gave each woman voice and presented the interviews thematically in order to understand individual knowledges and truths. From my observations, I also developed my own voices and my own subjectivities, knowledges and truths by drawing on feminist theory to reflect more widely without imposing it on the women's perspectives. By examining emerging themes, and analysis of data I was able to build on my existing ideas and to take the analysis further, in Chapter Seven I examine triathlon as a woman's technology of the self (Markula 2003).

To clarify the structure of the thesis I now summarise the content of chapters.

The aim of the next chapter is to outline the theoretical framework that underpins my thesis. In order to demonstrate the wider feminist picture, I briefly discuss the basic tenets of second wave feminisms. I then argue that poststructural feminisms emphasise the differences among women and have led to the dissolution of the 'women as a group' approach and the reinforcement of identity politics. In my study 'I am referring to a specific type of ontology, not an ontology attached to the category 'all women'' (Stanley 1990, p.14). I argue that contemporary feminisms influenced by Foucault have a particular relevance to the analysis of gender-power relations in this work. I illustrate how the headings of language; discourse; power, resistance and freedom; knowledge and truth; and the subject have been revised by poststructural feminisms and I argue the significance of these for my own study. I acknowledge that there are no such clear-cut boundaries, but rather numerous overlaps of these issues. It is impossible to discuss one area of feminist theory without reference to the others; for example, feminisms and language both focus on various discourses of power. Power is central to gender relations. Power is very much implicated in the production of knowledge. Power, knowledge and truth are intertwined.

Chapter Three places the woman's body in sport in the context of the previous theorisation in Chapter Two. Its main focus is on the inter-relationship between the discourses of health and the discourses of femininity. For the purpose of my argument I will discuss how histo-medical knowledge and truth has constructed discourses of femininity, which, even today, serve as a cultural control by positioning women. Alternatively, as power is viewed as also a positive construct in my research, I suggest that women may experience discourses of health (for example amenorrhoea) as empowering.

I show how histo-culturally women's bodies have been materialised (Butler 1990, 1993) in medicine and sport. Although the starting point of this work was osteoporosis, the analysis moved on to focus on the wider discursive discourses that surround triathlon and sought to understand how these discourses impact upon sportswomen's behaviour and their health. For example, society's visual expectations of women, have cajoled many into striving for the perfect toned athletic body. Women's relationship with food is shown as being both medicalised and a gendered construction. Normalising cultural forms which construct the tyranny of slenderness and the relentless quest for the perfect shape, is often the central focus in many women's lives. I suggest how the positivistic term 'eating disorders' should be re-theorised in poststructural feminism as discourses of eating. I argue that discourses of eating arise out of normative feminine cultural practices, which train the body in docility whilst being experienced in terms of power and control. I show how there is some evidence to suggest other discourses of health may be related outcomes of ritualistic training and discourses of eating.

The main purpose of Chapter Four is to discuss my methodological framework and how these reflect the aims of the research. I select a research paradigm and then show how my theoretical framework translates into a feminist ethnographic research agenda. In this chapter I show the advantages of doing feminist ethnographic research as an alternative research methodology. I argue that my research has a particular identity that draws upon various research methods. They include challenging expert power, the appropriation of voice and the ownership of the research product. Reflexivity, in-depth woman to woman interviews and the emergence of themes are all methods used in feminist research that help to fulfil my aims. This chapter shows how feminist research that focuses on women in an institution of sport, raises some different issues. It raises the question about the identity of doing feminist research as well as outlining some of the practical problems that I had to overcome (for example negotiations with gatekeepers

and access to the sites, data collection, ethical considerations and writing issues). The selection of material in the data collection through necessity means that many important and interesting themes have been omitted. Feminist poststructural interpretations of language; discourse; power, resistance and freedom; knowledges and truths; and the subject are reflected in the analysis. I stress how I gave each woman space to tell her story and then by drawing on feminist theory but not imposing it I was able to present the data thematically in order to gain understanding of women's alternate knowledges and truths.

Chapter Five is my first analysis chapter. I show how the deconstruction of histories is a key to understanding power, of which gender-power relations is a part. Triathlon has its own internal histories that are encased in gendered assumptions and meaning is derived from the discourse in which triathlon takes place (Weedon 1997). It is necessary to deconstruct the discourses in the institutions of triathlon (briefly the British Triathlon Association (BTA) and then specifically the club) to analyse how language; discourses; power, resistance and freedom; knowledges and truths; and the subject have been culturally constructed. I analyse both formally constructed discourses (official documents) and informally constructed discourses (such as opinions of members). As power is viewed as coming from below, resistances through cultural practices (such as the women's opinions at meetings) are analysed as resistance as freedom.

Chapter Six focuses on the women's lives through their own stories. Each woman in her own words introduces us to the first chapter of her life. After each, I discuss the 'overlapping' themes that I have found pertinent to both theory (supported in the literature) and practice (related to my triathlon experience) (see Scraton and Flintoff 1992). I explore with my storytellers individual sense of self and their subjectivities. I ask each woman to draw her social worlds at two different times in her life. This chapter asks what are the specific subjectivities that each woman aspires to, and then it goes on to discuss how each woman uses her body to maintain her desired subjectivities through the cultural practices she employs in her daily life.

Chapter Seven discusses the themes that emerged from the data: clothing, equipment and fashion; ritualistic training routines; discourses of eating; and other discourses of health. These themes are all entrenched in gender power relations, discourses of performance, discourses of the body, discourses of health and discourses of femininity. I suggest that a discourse (for example: of performance, of eating, of femininity) can become dangerous when the woman's multiple subjectivities (as a triathlete, as slim, as

fast) are maintained to an extreme in her life and thus materialise the sportswoman's body as unhealthy (amenorrhoea, osteoporosis, injured).

I ask the question can triathlon act as a woman's technology of the self? I see a technology of the self as being cultural practices that the woman employs to consciously challenge discursive power relations and to develop her own sense of freedom.

Chapter Eight concludes.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Ennis (1999) explains how important theoretical frameworks are in guiding a robust research process and creating a dynamic interplay between theory and data. The aim of this chapter is to show the theoretical framework from which this study is developed. The intention is to provide a thorough theoretical basis for my analysis of gender in the triathlon club and ask the question, what part can feminist theory play in my study? In order to show the wider feminist picture, I begin with a brief overview of the main tenets of early feminisms relating them back to my own positioning as a woman in sport. The main emphasis of this chapter is on poststructural feminisms, as these enabled me to analyse gender as a power relation in this work. I discuss contemporary feminisms using headings of: language; discourse; power, resistance and freedoms; knowledges and truths and the subject (Adams St. Pierre's 2000). Although the headings helps the organisation of the thesis I stress that they do not define clear-cut boundaries rather the headings are relational to each other. For example, power is central to gender relations. Power is very much implicated in the production of knowledge. Power, knowledges and truths are intertwined.

It must be emphasised that there is no such thing as *feminism* (Kidd 2002, p.171), rather, there are a number of diverse and contradictory 'strands' or 'pluralities' of *feminisms*. Feminisms, however, all have a number of ideas in common. Feminist sociology does not seek to affirm the status quo (the way things are/have always been), rather it seek to challenge assumptions about gender. As Stanley (1990) insists:

Feminism is not merely a 'perspective', a way of seeing; nor even this plus an epistemology, a way of knowing; it is also an ontology, a way of being in the world ... I am referring to a specifically feminist ontology, not an ontology attached to the category (all) women (p.14).

I start this chapter by putting myself into the text whilst exploring the different tenets of second wave feminisms and outlining their developments and application to me as a woman in sport.

The omission of the gendered experience which I can now identify in works by writers such as Foucault (1980) echoed my feelings in my first degree that as a woman, I still did not have a right to know, to speak, to question, to challenge or to change. The generic 'man' in *mankind* (and did not include me as a woman who wanted to play football, a mother, single parent, woman professional) and in triathlon *Ironman*, or

Enduroman did not include me (as a woman who had moved on to compete in triathlon). I could identify with Hollingsworth (1996) who recounts ‘as long as my particular woman’s viewpoint was seen as too threatening to bring to the conversation *on knowledge*, rather than illuminating the potential for *reconstructing knowledges*, I was not sure whether my knowledge would count’ (p.35).

I was a baby when women created the conscious-raising movement known as women’s liberation (mid 1960s) and although I have not immediate recall of it, in retrospect it may have affected how I was materialised as a young woman. The epistemologies of this movement were narrowly categorised into three: liberal, radical and Marxist feminism and they all share the assumption that it is both possible and necessary to specify the *cause* of women’s oppression. Feminist theories can also be categorised by themes; ‘liberal democratic beliefs (liberal feminists), structural power relations (radical, Marxist) and recently a post-structuralist notion of difference and power as plural and productive (black feminism, poststructural feminism)’ (Scruton and Flintoff 2002, p.32). Before I give a general collective overview of the basic tenets of second wave feminism I will first give the essence of the three assumptions.

Liberal feminists cite prejudice, irrationality and discrimination, as the cause of gender difference putting their faith in democracy as the means to change society. The goal of liberal sports feminism is to expose historically acquired gendered inequalities in sports (Hargreaves 1994) and granting women the rights (equality), privileges (funding) and space (facilities) that have historically been given to men. Liberal feminists argue that institutions such as the family, the school and the media socialise boys and girls into different sports from an early age (Greendorfer 1993). I went to an all girls’ school and we were offered only the socially appropriate girls’ sports such as netball, gymnastics, athletics and rounders. What is missing from the liberal feminist argument is an analysis of gender relations. Liberal feminism does not challenge the fabric of society, as women of this persuasion see nothing wrong with society and aspire to do what men do.

Radical feminists claim that ‘women’s biology is the root of all oppression, it was especially concerned with control of fertility and reproduction by men, and the way that this was manifest in the ideologies and daily practices of marriage, compulsory heterosexuality and motherhood’ (White 2002, p.138). Specifically, radical feminists challenge the systematic maintenance of male power through men’s heterosexuality and patriarchy. The family is seen as the basis of the hierarchical sexual division of labour that must be overthrown. In my own family my father was a full time worker and my

mother was a housewife and mother. Radical feminism is also criticised for categorising *all* women as a homogenous group (Francis 2002). It does not take into account the divisions of race, ethnicity and ability *in* the category of women. More importantly, it ignores the power relations within groups of women (Scruton and Flintoff 2002). For example, radical feminists see no significant difference in power between women with disabilities and able-bodied women and between women of different race, cultures or colour.

Marxist feminists take an economic determinist approach to feminism, arguing that capitalism and patriarchy are interlinked and see both as systems of power. They perceive gender inequality as rooted in social class inequality and do not see how any 'real equality of opportunity can exist where wealth and power are in the hands of an elite ruling class' (Boutilier and SanGiovanni 1994, p.99). For example, the role of the woman as homemaker and child carer (my mother) provides unpaid essential (but undervalued) work, which benefits the male worker (my father). The solution to the domination of men and the subordination of women is seen by Marxist feminists to be the overthrow of capitalism (Kidd 2002).

There are some basic collective tenets of second wave or 'old' feminisms:

- The structure of gender unites and controls society
- Power is inherently evil or a negative, repressive force, it 'excludes', it 'reprocesses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'.
- Freedom is liberation, a process with an end. It is liberty, a possession of each individual person. Freedom is one unified vision of revolution for all women.
- Language reflects the reality of the world.
- Knowledge and truth are held by science dominated by men.
- The true structural force in society is economic production
- All men dominate all women
- Patriarchy serves capitalism

Today feminist thought recognises no clear boundaries, rather 'each wave grows out of and contains aspects of the wave that started further out from the shoreline' (Scruton and Flintoff 2002, p.31). I suggest the analogy of London's skyline. One may be awed by the exotic glass skyscrapers, yet still integral to the overall view are valuable historical architectures such as St Paul's Cathedral, or the Houses of Parliament. The same applies to feminisms - at no time is one theory totally replaced by another. They all inform feminist research. Instead there are many overlaps between different

positions, 'Writers shift their own understandings and *new* feminisms emerge out of existing theoretical positions' (Scruton and Flintoff 2002, p.30). To compartmentalise and to label different strands is, therefore, a false separation. Headings are only used in the following discussion for easy handling and to aid explanation of my own understanding. This shift from early feminist theory is crucial as it reflects the broader conceptual shift in the latter part of the 20th century towards a socially constructed understanding of human action. It also shows a rejection of biological explanations for women's subordination in sport and establishes that gender *is* socially constructed (Scruton and Flintoff 2002).

A review of recent publications on feminism suggests a contemporary shift in feminist theorisation which it could be argued is a new wave or a third wave feminism (Whitehead 2002). These new feminisms grew out of criticism of research that left no room to investigate the differences *in* the socially constructed terms of our society. The work of Foucault has proved useful to a great deal of feminist thought for example, Bartky, (1988); Bordo (1993); Hall (1996); Scruton and Flintoff (2002); Adams St. Pierre (2000) and Francis (2002). Although Foucault (1965/1961, 1970/1966, 1972/1969, 1973/1963) did not actually write from a feminist perspective, his view that gender is not a natural quality, but the effect of historically specific power relations, has proved an important analytical tool for highlighting women's battles against subordination and resistance in sport.

Poststructural theories

Lather (1991) places contemporary social analysis under the '*deconstruction paradigm*'. She defines this as 'to keep things in process, to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to continually demystify the realities we create, to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal' (1991, p.13). Gender is no longer a unifying concept. Emerging perspectives, epistemologies and ontologies view gender from a multifaceted complex position where there is difference *in* the sex characteristics of woman or man; or differences *within* gender; masculinity and femininity; differences *in* sexuality, homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual. The deconstruction paradigm also acknowledges that there are intersections with other identity categories such as race, ability, class, and religion, and that there are differences in these categories too. In the extreme, it has been argued that these categories have ceased to exist (Fenstermaker and West 2002).

Contemporary social analyses challenge the underlying assumptions of mainstream social science by discarding 'epistemological assumptions, refuting methodological conventions, resisting knowledge claims, obscuring all versions of truth, and dismissing policy recommendations' (Rosenau 1992, p.3). Postmodernism and poststructuralism were presented by theorists as ideas that promoted social change – by promising improved critical practice, empowerment, or emancipation (Francis 1999a, Scraton and Flintoff 2002, Lather 1991). According to Rosenau (1992), there is considerable overlap between the terms 'postmodernism' and 'poststructuralism' and there has been little effort to distinguish them. In some literature the two terms are used interchangeably as the two theories often are subsumed by each other. In general, while postmodernism may be termed 'a position' (Weedon 1997a) poststructuralism offers useful and important tools in the struggle for change by concentrating on deconstruction, language, discourse, meaning and symbols. As Hughes (2003) argues, poststructuralist deconstruction can be viewed as a methodology that is used to examine 'how commonly accepted facts about women's lives come to be established and maintained' (p.66). Drawing upon poststructural analyses, I explore the relations between discourses, subjectivities and power in the triathlon club. In many respects the views of poststructuralists represent a blending together of ideas from some structuralist thinking and some postmodernist thinking. I move away from an emphasis on the structures which texts share, and encompass the sophisticated verbal and philosophical strategies based on a feminist appropriation of the theories of Foucault's work on discourse (Mills and Pearce 1996, p.311).

One of the questions I asked myself was how may feminist theory be useful to my study? (Anyon 1994, p.117). As a researcher I have been persuaded that a central focus of feminist work should be *praxis* (Scraton and Flintoff 2002, Hall, 1996) – the relationship between theory and action. While there are obvious differences between theory and practice, the two are also integrated in that they inform each other in basic ways; 'Theory exemplifies a kind of practice, and practice always instantiated a particular theory' (Anyon 1994, p.117). Scraton and Flintoff (2002) support this view and state 'theory is only useful if it *informs* political action and practice and if it is also *developed out of* these' (p.3). In the arena of sport there is 'a notable gap between our theory/research and our practice' (Hall 1996, p.78). Ethnographic research has been suggested as a useful way forward and feminist ethnographic research demands feminist

praxis (Hall 1996). Feminist praxis and education at the triathlon club were important aims of my work.

My study engages with the real world of a triathlon club and when asked whose interests does my research serve? The answer as a feminist is quite simply the women in the triathlon club. In this thesis I show how a poststructural approach suits feminist ethnographic research, as it requires me to ask questions about the women's lives in different ways. My analysis challenges both discursive and material structures that limit the ways in which we think about gender and triathlon.

Poststructural feminisms

There were several reasons why a third wave (Whitehead 2002) of feminist theorising started to gather momentum 30 years ago. Firstly, the many assumptions of white feminism were exposed to be ethnocentric which caused divisions in feminist thought. Secondly, the 'old' feminist discourses did not deal adequately with the multiplicity or contextuality of meaning. Poststructural thinkers tried to address the weakness perceived in early feminist theories while retaining the basic tenets, such as an ultimate aim to empower women and improve their lives.

At first, there was an uneasy tension over the union of the 'old' feminism and poststructuralism. The definition of feminism(s) is highly contested, as is that of poststructuralism. Adams St. Pierre (2000) suggests that it is impossible to produce a comfortable synthesis from those hazy locations. She argues that 'some rhizomatic hybrid has appeared and continues to become as poststructural feminism is strategically refigured, but not secured, in multiple systems of meaning' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.477). Deleuze and Guattari (1987/1972) originally used the example of the rhizome to disrupt the 'weariest kind of thought' (p.5) that roots itself in the foundations as trees do. The rhizome that has become poststructural feminism(s), is like vineweed, it multiplies and spreads so that it can never be uprooted and contained. I argue that sport needs new inscriptions and must consider multiple systems of meanings that include knowledges and truths of both masculinities and femininities.

A poststructuralist feminist approach is especially concerned with the social construction of gender-power relations. This approach has informed my analysis. Barrett and Philips (1992) show the movement away from macro theory towards local studies and argue how in post-structuralism there is no longer a single 'truth' or explanation of a particular issue. My study will look sceptically at the 'older feminisms' and their ideas that women are oppressed by a lack of equal rights (liberal), by

capitalism (Marxist), by men (radical), or by a mixture of capitalism and patriarchy (socialist). Instead, post-structuralist theory will enable me to consider difference, and the complex interplay of sport, gender and class in the triathlon club. Thinking about what Barrett and Philips (1992) say in relation to earlier subcultural studies tending to see women as a homogenised group, has alerted me to give individual women voice in my study.

In post-structuralism, language and other forms of symbolic representation are taken to be important forms of social practice, which involve particular sets of meanings, identities and social relations. Hirsch and Keller (1990) argue that this multifaceted approach to abolishing women's oppression has created a discourse of difference. Feminists argue for a focus on the instability of female identity and the active creation and recreation of women's needs and concerns. In my study, I consider the possibilities of individual subjectivities and the diversity of femininities. Butler (1990) argues that feminism had made a mistake by trying to assert that 'women' were a group with common characteristics and interests. This suggests any research that homogenises women may unwittingly reinforce regulation and reification of gender. As I discuss in Chapter Five in the example of the AGM 2000, this pluralistic assumption of fragmentation and focus on difference could ignore women's shared experiences of gender. It tends to emphasise what divides women, at the expense of those experiences that they may possibly share or have in common (Maynard 2002, p.119).

Poststructural feminism challenges the binary view of gender relations in which human beings are divided into two clear-cut groups of women and men. The binary terms man/woman are questioned and, instead, my study takes seriously the argument for multiple femininities and masculinities. As we shall see later in relation to the women in the triathlon club, this idea was key to my analysis as it suggests that a woman should be able to form and choose her individual identities. Being influenced by Butler (1990) I consider the possibility that gender is not a fixed attribute, instead, it should be seen as a fluid dynamic, which changes at different times, and in various social contexts.

Histo-cultural discourse has constructed a continuum where it has been normalised that sex (male, female) is seen to cause gender (masculine, feminine) which is seen to cause desire (for the other gender) for example the heterosexual family unit. Butler's (1990) approach however, takes inspiration from Foucault and argues that these supposed links should be shattered. Gender and desire can instead be viewed as flexible and free-floating.

The following overview presents several key concepts that have informed the analysis of my own research- language; discourse; power; resistance and freedom; knowledge and truth; and the subject. Borrowing these headings from Adams St. Pierre (2000) I briefly show how feminists have employed these reinscriptions in their political work for social justice. Adams St. Pierre's (2000) research focuses on education. I will, however, be adapting her work to the arena of sport and triathlon. The 'usefulness' of the poststructural position described below is that it can be employed to examine any social situation in order to think differently about it, for example the triathlon club. What seems 'natural' can be challenged so that other possibilities may be opened up.

Recently postmodern and poststructuralist theorising has brought to prominence the significance of language in understanding the non-fixity of meaning (Hughes 2003). As I discuss in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, language emerged from the data as a key theme for analysis in my study. As I will illustrate later, language plays a key role in oppression and freedom in triathlon. Language both constrains, and gives power by shaping alternate knowledges and truths and plays an important role in constant shifts of gender-power relations.

Language

Poststructuralists such as Derrida (1976) challenged scientific objectivity, pointing out that there is nothing outside the text; we are all immersed in language or 'text' and a belief in objectivity is simply the production of a storyline. This view suggests that text could be interpreted in many different ways, allowing the possibility for dominant storylines to be 'deconstructed' (Francis 2002, p.40). Derrida (1973, 1978) argues that we need to analyse signs to see what they are hiding from us, to separate signs from the object in order to see more clearly what the real truth of the matter is. This is the process he calls 'deconstruction'. As Cornell (1991) argues, Derrida's work is about the productive power of language. He moves beyond the second wave feminist idea that power comes from above and that structures control human action and give meaning to human life. Instead, 'the plurality of language and the impossibility of fixing meaning once and for all are the basic principles of poststructuralism' (Weedon 1997a, p.82). In my study, I consider the possibility that language may be central to the development of subjectivities. Derrida suggests that structures have no meaning apart from that given to them by humans through the use of language, and that it is the use of words by some people to create meaning that leads to the lack of power of others. I am interested in the way words – speech, writing and sets of communication-based interactions, or

discourse- limit (and possibly empower) those whose identities are controlled by them (Kidd 2002). The argument suggests that 'language is multiple and varied with no guarantees of the transference of intended meaning, so too, subjectivity is multiple, varied, contradictory and processual' (Hughes 2002, p.66). Drawing on Scheurich (1997), I suggest the relationship between language and meaning shifts between people, across time and according to varied situations.

Early theories of language suggest that there is equivalence between a word and something in the world. If words point to pre-existing things in the world, then language merely names and reflects what it encounters. Often, however, things/ideas/people that are significantly different, are unified into the same category. There are more signifiers than signified in culture, and thus signifiers take on a reality of their own. For example, many very different people and cultures are categorised under the homogenous term *woman*. This means that '...their differences across the other identity categories – race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, wellness, etc. – are subsumed under the essence of a single identity category, gender, in an attempt to produce order and regularity' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.480). It is necessary to define the essence of a category as well as the essence of the things in the world, so they can be equated. 'This activity which is accomplished with language, is the pursuit of identity, and it, of course, privileges identity over difference' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.480).

As I show in my study different phases of a woman's life may bring about different foci. In parts of her life for example, wellness or ethnicity may become more important to a woman than gender. Foucault's (1970,1966) ideas have been used effectively by feminists to illustrate how 'language has been used historically to socially construct binaries, hierarchies, categories, tables, grids and complex classification schemes that are said to reflect an innate, intrinsic order of the world' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.480). As I will show later, my work constantly challenges these constructions of power which socially imply women are inferior to men. For example, the first term in binaries such as mind/body, subject/object, and culture/nature is masculine and privileged and the second is feminine and disadvantaged (Heckman 1990). The understanding of power in early feminism was inadequate for my research because it did not address the discourses that are responsible for materialising sportswomen's bodies. The construction of power through language was more suited to my study. I use deconstruction to make visible how language operates to produce very real, material, and excluding structures in triathlon. My data highlights how power, knowledge and

truth are all intertwined discourses that have histo-culturally constructed the contemporary world where women are marginalised, and sportswomen are deemed inferior to sportsmen.

Poststructural thought accepts Saussure's idea that 'each sign derives its meaning from its difference from all other signs in the language' (Weedon 1987, p.23). It is not anything intrinsic to the signifier 'sportswoman' for example, that gives it meaning, but rather its difference from other signifiers of femininity such as 'mother' and 'housewife'. Poststructural feminism however, highlights the limitations to Saussure's theory. He does not account for a multiplicity of meaning for the same signifier, for example woman. In my study, I suggest that the meaning of the signifier for example woman, or triathlete is never fixed, rather it is constantly postponed; we can never know precisely what something means. The woman's body has been materialised (Butler 1993) through language and cultural practices. In order to challenge the power discourses in the club, my study aims to deconstruct and reconstruct language to reflect the diversities of the triathlon club and to constantly trouble the status quo. My intention is to report on how the women are subjugated but may at the same time also be subjects; freeing themselves from the absolutes that have constructed them as weak, passive and *powerless*. It is not good enough for women to settle for that's just the way things are in triathlon or sport, as that insinuates that there is some authority outside human activity. Feminism's motto that everything is political should be coupled with the poststructural notion that 'everything is dangerous' (Foucault 1984a/1983, p.343).

In conclusion, on language, my study suggests that we must 'shift our understanding and consider that language is not transparent, that ... absence rather than presence and difference rather than identity produce the world' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.484), only then will we construct equitable power relations through language.

The next theoretical section is a logical progression because power is the ability to control and use a set of languages, called discourses, to define others. Discourses are complex and subtly embedded in the language by which we understand and create society. They are unspoken but always present and ever influential in our thinking and actions. Gender-power relations are both inherent in and actively shaped (challenged or reproduced) by discourses. We speak discourses and discourses speak us (Foucault (1971, 1970, 1984a). In thinking about language and becoming aware of the major role discourses play in the construction of power relations I am able to ask the questions: how are women socially constructed through language? How is language used to

position women in power relations, or, as a form of resistance, do women position themselves through language in the triathlon club?

Discourse

The ethnographic setting of the club I am studying, I take to be socially constructed through discourses. In my study I am interested in identifying what discourses are prominent in the women's stories? How do dominant discourses affect the way the women live their sporting lives? What are the dominant discourses that function in triathlon? How do they get constructed and disciplined in the club? How are discourses resisted and challenged by the women?

Feminists (Adams St. Pierre 2000, Bove 1990) have been influenced by Foucault's theory of discourse (1965/1961, 1979/1975, 1978/1976) to illustrate how language is socially constructed. McNay (1992) suggests that Foucault regards knowledge as not constituted by the human subject, but as an effect of a primarily linguistic discursive formation - 'a set of fundamental rules that define the discursive space in which speaking subjects exist' (p.26). In my study, theories of discourse, like poststructural theories of language, may enable me to understand how knowledge, truth and subjects in triathlon 'are produced in language and cultural practices as well as how they might be reconfigured' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.486). Drawing upon Scott (1988) I also suggest that, in triathlon, discourses are 'historically, socially, and institutionally specific structures of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs' (p.35) which can be identified in what *is* said but also what is *not* said. Discourses are established ways of thinking supported by power which may enable me to understand how *what* is said fits into a network that is determined by its own history and conditions of existence. Discourses also lie in the silences, in between the lines or possibilities hinted at in the construction of language. Who gets to speak in the triathlon club? Who is spoken to? Some triathletes may be 'the subjects of statements and others are objects of statements' (Barrett 1991, p.35).

Discourse theory focuses on the analysis of a text. In my study, texts include cultural forms such as the woman's body as well as lived experiences such as triathlon. A text is a historically produced, politically compatible re-presentation of certain cultural relations. In analysing the discourses in a specific time in history, it is possible to identify what people have taken as 'truths' at that time. Discourse is thus understood as power-knowledge, which becomes dispersed in a network of micro-relations, allowing the possibility of challenge.

The analysis of texts in triathlon (such as the sportswoman's body) will be revealed to show the ways in which cultural forms are inscribed with particular preferred meanings then circulated to a public to obtain consent to a 'natural order' of things. 'Once a discourse becomes 'normal' and 'natural' it is difficult to think and act outside it' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.485). As we will discuss later in the rules of discourse it makes sense to say certain things act in certain ways (for example long distance triathlon is called Ironman). 'Other ways' seems unintelligible, 'outside the realms of possibility' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.485). Poststructural feminisms recognise, however, that we are not 'docile bodies' (Foucault 1965). As my data shows, resistance to the dominant discourses of triathlon is possible when individuals think of different things to say or do. I argue that power cannot exist as one stable repressive force because discourses are continually shifting. I try to show that discourses are not static, the silences are always being revised and contested and meaning is always deferred so triathlon culture is constantly unstable.

A discourse depends on shared assumptions, so that a culture's discourses are inscribed in its discursive practices (for example the discourse of femininity is inscribed in the marginalisation of women in sport). As I will show through the women's stories, another example of a 'normalised' discourse is patriarchy. Patriarchy is perpetuated through an acceptance of a set of 'commonsense truths' about men and women that continue to control and subordinate women (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.486). A poststructural feminist critique of patriarchy enables me to ask questions such as; how does patriarchy function in the women's lives? 'Where is it to be found? How does it get produced and regulated? What are the linguistic, social and material effects on women? How does it continue to exist?' (Bove 1990, p.54) I try to answer these questions in the specific, local and everyday situations of the women's lives. Deirdre explains in Chapter Seven, that once women 'can locate and name the discourse and practices of patriarchy, they can begin to refuse them' (p.486).

Issues of gender-power relations emerged strongly from the data at the start of my research. In the next section I discuss why poststructural feminists have seen relational theories of power, resistance and freedom as key issues, and I will explain the 'usefulness' of specific ideas for analysing the triathlon club.

Power, resistance and freedoms

Bordo (1993) shows that affirmative action should not be thought of as justice for the groups historically excluded but as 'diversification and reinvigoration of the dominant

culture' (Bordo, 1993, p.28). In my study I worked on the premise that power does not belong to an individual nor is it essentially negative. Feminist appropriations of Foucault not only rethink the location of power but also its nature. In this way it can be argued that feminisms can create 'reverse discourses' of power (Foucault 1997/1984), which in turn empower and resist. Comprehension of this new sort of power requires two conceptual changes from 'older feminisms'. Drawing on Bordo (1993) I cease to imagine:

'power', as the *possession* of individuals or groups – as something people 'have' – and instead see it as a dynamic or network of non-centralised forces. Second, we must recognize that these forces are *not* random or haphazard, but configure to assume particular historical forms, within which certain groups and ideologies *do* have dominance (p.26).

Like other feminists (Wright 1995, Francis 2000, Markula 2003) I have adopted Foucault's (1997/1984) notions that power exists in *relations*. The word 'power' is hardly ever used alone, but feminists speak of 'gender-power relations' or 'power relations' or 'relations of power'. Foucault (1997/1984) describes his theory of power:

When I speak of *relations of power*, I mean that in human relationships ... power is always present: I mean a relationship in which one person tries to control the conduct of the other ... these power relations are mobile, they can be modified, they are not fixed once and for all ... (they are) thus mobile, reversible, and unstable. It should also be noted that power relations are possible insofar as the subjects are free. ... This means that in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation), there would be no power relations at all (Foucault 1997/1984, p.292).

Power is not something that can be 'acquired, seized or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations' (Foucault 1978/1976, p.94). Foucault argues that power 'comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled as the root of power relations' (p.94).

I see the relations of power in the triathlon club as a dynamic *situation*, whether personal, social or institutional (Halperin 1995, p.17). Even though power relations are multiplicities that are not fixed once and for all but are 'unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable and tense' (Foucault 1978/1976, p.93), they can be coded in ways that integrate them.

One of the aims of my study is to analyse the wider discursive practices that surround triathlon. The discourses of femininity and discourses of performance were two issues that emerged from the data. Foucault's (1979/1975) notion of disciplinary power and the panopticon was helpful in analysing how these discourses may function. The panopticon is a prison in which a guard stands in a central tower from which he can observe at all times prisoners located in cells arranged in a circle around the tower. Since the prisoners are visible and believe that they are under surveillance at all times by a guard that they cannot see, the prisoners begin to discipline themselves, even when a guard is not present. Foucault (1979/1975) states:

hence, the major effect of the panopticon: is to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things so that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearers (1979/1975 , p.201).

Applying this to my own work disciplinary power may work invisibly because of the visibility of the sportswoman. It is possible to argue that she is constantly being seen, examined, and subjected – she is the trapped object of the guard's (coach's, peer's) gaze. Elaborating on the image of the panopticon, Foucault (1979/1975) goes on to describe what he calls the modern 'disciplinary society' (p.209) that proliferates and is diffused into every aspect of human life (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.492). There are all sorts of disciplinary mechanisms, practices, technologies, and institutions, such as the triathlon club, which may be seen as the 'panopticon of everyday' (Foucault 1978/1976, p.223) that maintain the surveillance of women. Contemporary society controls its population through the efficient mechanism of self-discipline. Discipline blocks relations of power in that it objectifies and fixes people under its gaze and does not allow them to circulate in unpredictable ways. Bordo (1993) theorised that '... prevailing forms of selfhood and subjectivity (gender among them) are maintained, not chiefly through physical restraint and coercion (although social relations may certainly contain such elements), but through individual self-surveillance and self-corrections to norms' (Bordo, 1993, p.27). Foucault (1977) argues:

There is no need for arms, physical violence, or material constraints.
Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze to which each individual

under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual is exercising his surveillance over, and against himself' (Foucault, 1977, p.155).

Resistance is an effect of a relation of power. I am interested to see as the women are never outside relations of power in the triathlon club, whether resistance occurs. Just as there are a multiplicity of relations of power so are there a multiplicity of resistances but 'the problem is knowing where resistance will organize' (Foucault 1978/1976, p.292). Just as multiple and diverse power relations can be strategically codified into states of domination, so too can multiple and diverse points of resistance be codified into a revolution. As I will show in Chapter Five there is never a total overthrow of power to establish freedom from oppression in the club, but instead the resistance in power relations proceeds on a case-by-case basis (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.492). This way (for example in the monthly committee meetings) resistance may be local, unpredictable and constant. Institutions (such as the triathlon club) and dominant forms *are* 'continually being penetrated and reconstructed by values, styles, and knowledges that have been developing and gathering strength, energy, and distinctiveness at 'the margins'' (Bordo, 1993, p.27).

Resistance rather than liberation is the goal for freedom in poststructural feminism. In this study freedom is not seen as one unified vision of revolution for all women. Due to the complexities and pluralities of individual women's lives, poststructuralism sees revolt as a collection of successful fragmented battles. Freedom is the constant questioning of constituted experience (Rajchman 1985). Women, in my study, are not taken to be born free, they are born into relations of power that they cannot escape. From birth, women are categorised, defined and classified. Freedom is therefore only achievable by a constant revolt in a set of everyday, concrete practices that has become commonsense or natural and that defines and limits us as individuals (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.492). Poststructural feminists argue that the struggles of women are local and specific, for example, feminists of colour may have quite different projects, goals and agendas than white feminists, and in these categories all will not have the same goal and some will share goals with others through difference. By focusing on local operations of power it is possible to examine how everyday bodily practices can constrain and empower women to change the institutional use of power in sport and triathlon. Like Markula (2003), I have always been interested in how physical activity can serve women's empowerment. One of the questions this thesis asks is what are the challenges

associated with the broadening of opportunities for physical empowerment and what does 'the embodiment of power' (Gilroy 1989) mean for women in the triathlon club?

In summary, my analysis of power is founded on the acknowledgement of historically and socially constructed knowledge and resistance. Relations of power are complex and shifting. Resistance and freedom are daily ongoing practices.

In the next section I suggest that power is intrinsically linked to historically and socially constructed knowledges. Knowledges and discourses are inseparable, as discourses are ways of viewing the world based upon privileged forms of knowledge. Knowledges in turn have become commodities and a form of power, rather than an absolute, truths in which resistance is integral. I acknowledge the possibility of pluralities of truths. I suggest that power, knowledges and truths are intertwined in complex ways. The next section illustrates the kind of questions I ask about knowledges and truths in the triathlon club.

Knowledges and truths

I will analyse the histories of discourses both in the triathlon club and in the women's lives. I use the histories of statements (knowledges) and attempt to answer the question, 'how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?' (Foucault 1972/1969, p.27). In the triathlon club, I aim to deconstruct the 'systems of rules, and their transformations, which make different kinds of statements possible' (Davidson, 1986, p.222). The development of knowledge is 'constructed in the play of power relations circulating in discourse and cultural practice' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.496). In my ethnography I deconstruct the historical assumptions, conditions and power relations that allow certain discourses to emerge in the triathlon club - for example, how did the discourse of femininity become structured into recognisable and legitimate domains of knowledge? 'Clearly, power is very much implicated in the production of knowledge' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.496). Domains of knowledge 'do not succeed each other dialectically ... They simply appear alongside one another (White, 1978, p.234). As I will demonstrate in Chapter Five when discussing the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2000, new discourses simply move into the spaces left empty by other discourses. As Foucault (1980/1977) states 'history has no meaning' (p.114). 'If things have been made then they can be unmade, as long as we know how they were made' (Foucault 1988a, p.37). By analysing the discourse and social practices represented in historical triathlon documents for example, I may learn how femininity, became an object of knowledge from which statements are produced as true or false.

Poststructural feminists have adopted the ideas that there are ‘different truths and different ways of speaking the truth’ (Foucault 1988b, p.51). In my study I understand truths as a relative concept and that it is open to contestation from below, for example, in Chapters Five, Six and Seven there are examples of ‘the construction of ‘alternative truths’ by individuals and marginalized and oppositional groups’ (McNay 1992, p.136). The oppositional truths that are articulated from below, however, ‘have no greater claim to ‘reality’ than official truths, but they hinder the ‘domination of truth’ (McNay 1992, p.137). Foucault (1980/1977) explains the relationship between truth and knowledge:

The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn’t outside power, or lacking in power Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints. And it induces regular effects on power. Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true’ (p.131).

Due to women’s marginalised positions in patriarchal cultures, women often do not participate in the construction of truth. Feminists have challenged this, and have been active in rethinking existing theories of knowledge. Adams St. Pierre (2000) and many other feminists (Benhabib 1995, Butler 1992, Weedon 1987, Heckman 1990, Grosz 1995, Lather 1991) argue that the truth of things is determined in relations of power that operate to subjugate women. Drawing upon Adams St. Pierre (2000) I theorise feminism as a ‘reverse discourse’ (Foucault 1978/1976, p.101), ‘one that circulates alongside patriarchal discourses and gains legitimacy as it works in and against its assumptions’ (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.499). This concept seemed particularly apt in my analysis of particular women’s stories.

In summary, it is argued that women can never escape the webs of power relations and the grids of regularity. Discourses and operations of power have constructed certain knowledges and truths about women that have become *commonsense* – that women are weak, emotional, and incapable of strenuous physical activity. ‘This commonsense knowledge has not been scientifically discovered but produced for particular reasons from particular positions of power’ (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.499). My study celebrates the idea that truth and knowledge are not ‘pure’ but unstable and power is open to resistance from below. Of particular interest to my own analysis, is how women are able to reconstruct their own alternate knowledges and truths by being subjects.

The subject

Poststructural feminism challenges the notion that the subject can be defined ahead of living. In this study, how discourses are constructed is critical. How women take up or resist certain subject positions is also important. As Adams St. Pierre (2000) argues 'A different kind of agency must thus be theorised since the discursive subject is not free to do whatever it will. Yet agency does not just disappear' (p.502). As I will go on to illustrate in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, the subject positions available to women in triathlon not only limit their agency but also enable certain kinds of knowledge and action not possible from other positions.

For Butler (1990), the subject is constituted in certain points where power overlaps action and knowing. Drawing on Hollingsworth (1996), in my analysis I ask the questions, 'where is the point of departure when it comes to knowing? Who speaks after all?' (p.36).

The terms *subject* and *subjectivities* are used to denote the ways in which selves are formed socially in and through language and other systems of meaning (Macdonald, Kirk, Metzler, Nilges, Schempp and Wright 2002, p.143). These concepts were key to Chapter Six where I give each woman voice to tell her own story. Like Weedon (1987), I suggest that a woman's subjectivity comprises 'the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world' (p.32). The way in which each woman in the triathlon club perceived her sense of self and my analysis of their subjectivities was crucial to the aims of my study. Weedon (1987) elaborates her notion of self and subjectivities:

The individual is both a site for a range of possible forms of subjectivity and, at any particular moment of thought or speech, a subject, subjected to the regime of meaning of particular discourse and enabled to act accordingly ... Language and the range of subject positions which it offers always exists (*sic*) in historically specific discourses which inhere in social institutions and practices and can be organized analytically in discursive fields (pp.34-35).

Weedon's (1987) description shows poststructural feminism's dual construction of subjectivity. It shows a subject that exhibits agency as it constructs itself by taking up available discourses and cultural practices, whilst at the same time being subjected. This was an interesting idea to apply to the triathlon club. Power exists in and amongst triathlon discourses and practice, and the subject is exposed to that power and forced

into subjectivity by those very same discourses and practices. Foucault (1984a) and Derrida (1996) argue that the subject is an effect of practice and cannot exist ahead of or outside language. Instead, in poststructural feminisms, the individual is a dynamic, an unstable construction of language, discourse and cultural practice. All experiences are constructed, all realities are imagined, and identities are produced as a result of ongoing effects of relations with, and response to society's codes (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.503). As Hollingsworth (1996) argues '... as subjects whose power shifts as we are repositioned daily in our collaborative work with others, we can continually remember *both how it feels to know and not to know*' (p.36). These theoretical insights have informed my analyses of the women's stories and my observations in the club.

Walkerdine (1990) suggests that inherent in the discursive positionings are different positions of power. In an institution such as the triathlon club, the relations of power produce individuals constituted as subjects and objects in a particular framework. 'An individual can become powerful or powerless depending upon the terms in which her/his subjectivity is constituted' (Walkerdine 1990, p.5). Never predetermined, these subjectivities identify various theoretical positions, 'working the possibilities of their convergences and trying to take account of the possibilities that they systematically exclude' (Butler 1990, p.9). The term '*embodied subjectivities*' was used in my study as an attempt to demonstrate that subjectivities are not simply mental constructs but that triathletes' bodies are inscribed with meanings which are produced in specific relations of power (Bordo 1993, Foucault 1979, Wright 2000a, 2000b, Macdonald et al. 2002).

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, the main characteristics of my study lie in the types of questions asked. In the case of the triathlon club and the discourse of sport who gets to be a subject? Who is positioned as a subject in the sporting social practice and who is not? Who is subjected? Categories created by discourse, and social practice 'function to create and justify social organisation and exclusion' (Flax 1993, p.96). Subjects can, however, choose not to repeat a practice, they can resist the normalising inscriptions (Foucault 1979). The multiplicity of the subject in poststructuralism means that agency lies in the subject's ability to decode and recode its identity in the discursive social forms and cultural practices. As Butler (1992) explains, power is not inherent in the subject's position itself. 'My position is mine to the extent that 'I' ...replay and resignify the theoretical positions that have constituted me, working the possibilities of their convergence, and trying to take account of the possibilities they systematically exclude' (p.9). This is complex, as Butler (1992) argues:

...the 'I' who would select between them is always already constituted by them ...these 'positions' are not merely theoretical products, but fully embedded organising principles of material practices and institutional arrangements, those matrices of power and discourse that produce me as a viable 'subject'(p.9).

In poststructuralism, meaning and identity produce each other in a dynamic manner as an ongoing activity (Flax 1993). Subjectivities may have many possible expressions and continually form, separate and reform. As Adams St. Pierre (2000) suggests: 'in poststructuralism, meaning can be strategically reinterpreted, reworked, and deferred since there is no referent for the subject' (p.504).

Butler (1995a) has prompted me to ask the questions: 'How is it that we become available to transformation of who and what we are, a contestation which compels us to rethink ourselves?' (p.13). I will look at my data analysis for answers in power relations and the localised struggles of language, discourses and cultural practices both of triathlon and of contemporary society.

Through poststructural feminism are we able to deconstruct the subject, and specifically challenge the homogenised term *woman*. As Butler (1992) explains, this does not mean the death of *the woman*, or of feminist politics, but the possibility of differences yet uncovered. The possibility for deconstruction and reconstruction of the subject is precisely what is so appealing. Poststructural feminists in education and physical education (Walkerdine 1990, Butler 1987, Adams St. Pierre 2000, Scraton 1989, Clarke 1995, Flintoff 1993) have already found the poststructural subject to be a fertile site for reinscription.

The final section of this chapter will show how poststructural feminism has been a powerful tool in similar deconstruction of the poststructural subject 'sportswoman'.

Poststructural feminisms and sport

As Scraton and Flintoff (2002) suggest, 'post-structuralist feminist analyses of sport are as yet relatively undeveloped' (p.40). They are only now beginning to make their presence felt in the sociology of sport.

Foucault's understanding of the discourses that surround the body is particularly relevant for the feminist analysis of women, sport and triathlon. Foucault's (1979) work has been used to explore the notion of the 'docile body' and the 'panoptican' self-disciplining body. Bordo's (1993) work uses Foucault's (1979) theorisation of power and the body to show how women's relationships with food and exercise are linked to a socially constructed obsession to be thin. Mansfield and Maguire (2000) look at gender

power relations in the context of working out in a gym and explore how these women's identities are shaped and practised in and through their exercise experiences. They reveal how the women experience a variety of freedoms and restraints. The network of processes that they encounter and interpret in the gym culture and in the context of their wider social lives, however, are significantly marked by dominant (Western) ideals of feminine beauty. Markula (1995) analyses the ways in which the woman's body is disciplined through diet and exercise in aerobics. She concludes that the women studied gained positive outcomes of pleasure, self-confidence and self-esteem through attending their aerobics classes.

As Scraton and Flintoff (2002) argue, sport has been analysed in relation to its role in the preservation of binary opposites such as man/woman; white/other; able-bodied/disabled; heterosexual/homosexual and also for its potential to transgress gender, and deconstruct these binaries (Caudwell 1999, Obel 1995). Caudwell's (1999) work on women who play football deconstructs the dichotomies of sex/gender and masculinity/femininity through an interrogation of the concepts of 'butch' and 'female masculinity'. Clarke (1995, 1998) shows how the boundaries between heterosexuality and lesbianism are maintained in and through sport, and identifies the power of the individual woman to resist and transgress these boundaries. Kennedy (2001) focuses on the significance of language and discourse in her analysis of televised sport. She shows how the commentary in televised sport constructs and is constructed in gendered discourses. She shows how the use of language as power plays a crucial role in the maintenance of ambivalence about women in sport. Wright (1996) uses a feminist poststructuralist analysis to study the gender discourses about bodies in physical education. She specifically focuses on the significance of language in the maintenance of physicality. She shows that whilst language historically constructs binary opposites in athletes (male bodies as strong and skilled, female bodies as less physically able), it also has the power and potential to *deconstruct* binary relationships.

Dworkin and Messner (2002) address current questions about gender and sport in relation to empowerment, difference and the complex intersection of class, race, ability, and religion. They argue that contemporary feminist theory must go beyond a simple gender 'lens' to incorporate a more sophisticated analysis which engages with debates central to poststructuralism. They also, however, argue against a radical deconstruction of gender, or 'men' or 'women', and conclude that it is essential to retain and build

upon a concept of social structure, reasserting the significance of both gender and social class.

From more general discussion of recent feminist theorising and these studies of women in sport I conclude:

- Language is the key feature of power in society and it both shapes and controls women's action and maybe a point of resistance.
- Since signs are detached from reality we are no longer able to speak a single 'truth' since we have no basis upon which to establish this. We are simply left with many different interpretations and truths.
- Women are not controlled by invisible structure, but are defined and given identity by 'discourses' – sets of languages- which they can challenge and resist in their quest for individual subjectivities.
- What we consider to be 'reality' is created for us by language, and is based upon the construction of 'difference'. In other words, for something to be seen or defined as real or true, its opposite has to be defined as untrue or unreal at the same moment of definition.

The start of this chapter showed how poststructural feminism allows women (and all subordinated social groups) access to analyses that can shift those power relations. Poststructural feminism has its own political agenda. Certain themes – language; discourse; power resistance and freedoms; knowledges and truths and the subject – have been made intelligible, critiqued and inscribed by poststructural feminist analyses (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.506). These six themes will be used as points of analysis throughout my research.

Poststructural feminisms raise important issues in sport, and show a shift from the structural restraints on women and sport to highlight the possibilities of empowerment and resistance through sport. This study is a contribution to feminist empirical work in the sociology of sport, which analyses the contemporary mutation and proliferation of the category woman.

Chapter Three: Bodies that matter in triathlon

Introduction

For the purpose of my argument this chapter places the woman's body in sport in the context of the previous theorisation in Chapter Two. I will discuss how a histo-medical knowledge and truth has constructed discourses of femininity which, even today, serve as a cultural control by positioning women negatively in society and sport. Alternatively, as power is viewed as also a positive construct in my research, I will examine whether women experience a sense of empowerment (the confident sense of self that comes from being skilled in the use of one's body) through participating in triathlon.

In order to analyse the wider discursive practices that surround the woman's body in triathlon, this chapter specifically considers the relationship between the discourses of femininity and the discourses of health on the body. After poststructural feminisms discussed in Chapter two, I will deconstruct the historical assumptions, conditions and power relations that allow certain medical discourses and discourses of femininity to emerge as dominant. I have established previously that power is very much implicated in the production of knowledge. It could be argued that medical and scientific knowledge is not *for* women but rather *about* women.

Medical discourses have histo-culturally constrained women in sport, by constructing their own versions of language; discourse; power, knowledge and truth which have proved major normalising and regulatory functions in the creation of women's subjectivities. Through poststructural feminisms it is possible to challenge the categories that have provided justification for medical accounts – reason, truth, human nature, history, and tradition, and to trouble the status quo by asking *Whose? Whose* version of language? *Whose* nature? *Whose* truth? *Whose* history? *Whose* tradition? (Bordo 1993)

As an international sportswoman I have personally experienced how my body was immersed in the discourses of science and medicine, discourses of femininity and discourses of performance. Successful sportswomen remain constantly shrouded by a veil of suspicion that questions their performances because they are women. For example, the media suggested that Marion Jones must be on drugs after her success at the 2000 Olympics. Under the surveillance of disciplinary power I was regularly hooked up to machines to be tested for various components of fitness. I was continually tested for performance enhancing drugs and before the World Basketball

Tournament in 1981 I was subjected to a compulsory sex test before competition as women who were competing to a high level in sport were subject to prove that they were not men. I was asked for my permission, but if I had refused, then I could not have taken part. I realise from my own experiences that the discourses of science and medicine played a very influential part in the construction of me as a sportswoman and also often acted as a constraint on the way in which I lived my sport. For example, I wanted to pole vault at school in 1977, but then medical discourse constructed girls as physically unable to pole vault. Feminists successfully challenged these myths and now pole vaulting is an Olympic sport for women. My study challenges medical and scientific assumptions and later, using examples, I suggest instead of being subjugated, in contemporary society some women are becoming subjects and are using their bodies as successful reverse resistance (Markula 2003) against maternal, domestic femininity (for example, amenorrhoea as an empowering experience). The body as a site for disciplinary, normalising practices has influenced me as a feminist sport researcher to analyse the significance of sport in social contexts (Scruton and Flintoff 2002, Clarke 1998, Markula 2003). I examine the woman's body in triathlon as inscribed in power relations (Markula 2003, Cole 1991).

I am interested in whether the women in my study have similar or different experiences to my own and I analyse how the language; discourse; power, knowledge and truth of science and medicine constrain or empower contemporary triathletes in the club.

Discourses of femininity

Foucault's profound insights into the body and his argument that the body can only exist in discourse 'has done much to make sociologists take the body seriously' (Shilling 2003, p.14). Macdonald (1995) argues that discourse is particularly relevant to the analysis of gender and the body because it links language to the issues of power and the operation of the discursive cultural practices such as science and medicine and sport. Medical discourses have constituted women's bodies as objects that can be determined either true or false according to the codes of discourse. In science and medicine, it can be argued that language acts as a regulatory discourse that safeguards and perpetuates masculinised power and constructs discourses of femininity. Martin (1987) argues that the images of women's bodies in medical textbooks employ metaphors drawn from the language of capitalism and the emphasis is on production, control and hierarchy. For example, emotion has been a culturally ascribed

characteristic of women (Hargreaves 1994), but it has also been pathologised as an inferior and an inherently problematic form of experience, until feminisms encouraged an examination of cultural norms such as *boys don't cry*. This example illustrates how language is the process in which elements of discourse communicate specific meanings to audiences by implicit reference to other well-known discourses, themes, genres or media, which may also be present in, or insinuated by, the context of reception (Jensen 1995).

My analysis draws on this idea that sportswomen's bodies cannot be seen as isolated entities to be studied in exclusion from history and politics (Foucault 1976, 1980, Hall 1996, Bordo 1993). Discourses of femininity surrounding women's reproductive embodiment have historically oppressed women. Woman's histo-cultural role was as the bearer and nurturer of children. Women were positioned in the territory of reproduction and the texts surrounding their bodies focussed on the reproductive hormones, the womb and menstruation. In poststructuralist thought, power and knowledge directly imply one another. Doctors (who histo-culturally have been predominantly men) are depicted as the holders of knowledge and power, and are responsible for disciplining women into more productive and efficient machines or, as in the case of caesarean delivery, for controlling the entire birth. In our patriarchal culture, women often do not participate in the construction of truths. Science and medicine assume a core self. Women's minds and bodies were rationalised as dichotomous. Recent feminists question these normalising medical and scientific discourses that have constructed emotional, psychological and social instability around the woman's body. The passive roles of Victorian women, the fashionable 'fainting female' (Hargreaves 1994) and women's secondary status in society were all culturally constructed, based on gender-power relations and revered medical discourses surrounding the woman's body. Women in contemporary society are freer than women were in the past, sport is a legitimate activity and a fit toned female body is encouraged. Even today, however, similar perpetuated medicalised discourses of femininity continue to subjugate women. A woman continues to be seen as a mainly reproductive entity and her other successes for example, as a sportswoman, a triathlete or a professional are not deemed legitimate.

The major contribution of a feminist analysis of medical research to my study is to raise awareness of the extent to which seemingly value-free descriptions of physiological processes are layered with cultural meaning. A poststructural feminist

approach questions how the discourse of medicine and science has become structured into recognisable forms of knowledge about women's bodies. How is it that one particular set of statements about women's bodies appears rather than others?

In my study I work on the premise that the woman's cultural identity as reproducer in our society is treated distinctly differently from the woman's individual subjectivities as a sportswoman, scientist, or sociologist. Desire and ambition are related to academic or cultural success, whereas reproductive function is a marker of a natural kind of success. Viewed in this way, many aspects of women's enterprise and ambition are overlooked and devalued. Sportswomen, women as triathletes, scientists and sociologists can thus become invisible. A feminist analysis of knowledges and truths; and discourses of science and medicine in social arenas such as the triathlon club may be considered as a 'reverse discourse' (Foucault 1978/1976, p.101).

I argue that, as women, the ways we perceive our selves and our bodies, the meanings through which we understand them, are histo-culturally materialised. I concur with Butler (1993) that in place of construction we return to the notion of matter, 'not as a surface, but as a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface we call matter' (Butler 1993, p.9).

Drawing on Benhabib (1995), I suggest each individual in the triathlon club may develop an *embodied* identity which is sexed and specific to one's position in a differentiated social text. The importance of this idea for research is that this view sees the woman's body as central to the lives of embodied subjects, and argues that linguistic categories determine their experience of embodiment. Feminists who are influenced by Foucault (Butler 1990, 1993, 1999, Bordo 1993, Hughes 2003, Markula 2003, MacSween 1993, Diprose 1994) focus on how women's bodies are materialised, controlled and maintained by discourses of power and cultural practices. I take from them the notion that power can also be positive and that women can consciously use their bodies to resist cultural practices and be empowered by their experiences.

Gender performativity and how bodies matter (Butler 1993)

Feminism challenges biological determinism and assumptions that differences between the sexes are biological rather than cultural (Hall 1996, p.7). I question whether any internal or innate determinations of identity exist, and suggest (after Bordo 1993) that bodies are not born but are designed by culture. Foucault's ideas have inspired feminists to historicise women's bodies (Weeks 1992). Central to this history is a concern with mapping the relations which exist between 'the body and the

effects of power on it' (Foucault 1980, p.151). While it could be argued that we produce our own identities, this study also investigates the normalising cultural practices (Foucault 1976) of women, their bodies, sport and triathlon to discover how much these practices impact upon individual subjectivities. In the triathlon club, I want to understand how gender-power relations operate on bodies and on the way the women perceive their sense of self.

Foucault's analysis of the discursive body has enabled me to understand how the body is the basis on which individual identities, subjectivities and social inequalities are built. I see the woman's body as invested with various and changing forms of power, which suggests that subjectivities are fractured, shifting and unstable. In line with Fenstermaker and West (2002), I contend that 'doing gender' involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures' (p.4). It is a situated 'doing', carried out in one sense by individuals, but in the virtual presence of the panopticon (Foucault 1980). From this I argue that gender is not actually an existing identity (Butler 1990, Francis 1998, 2000, 2002, Walkerdine 1990, p.41) or a social characteristic of men or women, but what does exist is sex and sex differences (Francis 2002, p.41). Deconstructing the terms male or female, it is possible to argue that 'sex is a name that enslaves' (Butler 1990, p.115) and constructs its own norms. There is an illusion of 'an interior and organising gender core' but this itself is 'fabricated' through cultural production, a 'fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies' through performances (Bordo 1993, p.288). In line with Butler (1990) and Goffman (1976), Bordo (1993) explains that 'our identities, gendered and otherwise, do *not* express some authentic 'core self' but are the dramatic *effect* (rather than the cause) of our performances' (p.289). Bordo (1993) suggests that the only way to recast identities is to see discourse as one of the many interrelated modes by which power is made manifest and to see the body as thoroughly 'text' (p.291).

Butler's (1990, 1993, 1999) theory of 'gender performativity' is a framework in which to analyse the materialisation of the sexed body in the triathlon club. She contends that a body becomes gendered through the incessant performance of gender, and performativity is a process by which discourse produces the effects that it names. 'To be masculine or feminine requires the performance of masculinity and femininity' (Keyworth 2001, p.122). This led me to consider what then are the performances of gender in the triathlon club. Butler (1993) realises that the notion of

gender performativity is not akin to a coat that one can try on and discard at will, it is *not* an effect of choice. I see gender performativity in triathlon as not an individual act but ‘a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through the naturalisation in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration’ (Butler 1999, p.xiv-xv). Butler (1993) describes how ‘the regulatory norms of sex work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies, and, more specifically, to materialise the bodies’ sex, to materialise the bodies’ sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative’ (p.2). Butler (1993) argues that ‘there will be no way to understand gender as a cultural construct which is imposed on the surface of matter, understood either as the body or its given sex. Rather, once sex itself is understood in its normativity, the materiality of the body will not be thinkable apart from its materialisation of that regulatory norm’ (p.2).

I view the subject as constituted in certain points where power overlaps action and knowing (Butler 1990). I view the women in the club as having *embodied subjectivities* that are not simply mental constructs but whose bodies are inscribed with meanings which are produced in specific relations of power (Bordo 1993, Foucault 1979, Wright 2000a, 2000b). As I also argued in Chapter Two, the subject in triathlon *does* exhibit agency as it constructs itself by taking up available discourses and cultural practices, whilst at the same time being subjected (Weedon 1987).

Fenstermaker and West (2002) suggest the sex category is achieved when the categorisation is established and sustained by the socially required identificatory displays that proclaim one’s membership of one category or another. This suggests, however, that one sex category presumes one’s sex which is not always the case. I view the individual as a dynamic, unstable construction of language, discourse and cultural practice. Sex characteristics cannot be compartmentalised and pluralities mean that it is possible to claim membership in a sex category even when the sex criteria are absent. Individuals in the triathlon club are thus each positioned on multiple continua: of masculinity to femininity, young to old, novice to elite, rich to poor, parent to childless, single to married, black to white, heterosexual to homosexual and so forth. Gender, is the performance of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one’s sex category.

The Gender Game - Embodying power through play and sport

The first sonogram of a baby represents a human life with no gendered identity. The instant that *it* is named *he* or *she* the norms of sex are being cited. The women will tell us such in Chapter Six where, as children their subjectivities were exposed to a performativity of gender through language; discourse; power; resistance and freedom; knowledge and truth; that together will materialise their body. Some bodies may begin to be culturally negated from birth and materialised through what Butler (1993) describes as a 'girling' of girls (p.9). Contemporary Western culture insists on highlighting differences in babies' bodies by dressing them in pink or blue when, in fact, there are no differences of any significance. Culturally, young girls continue to be labelled as weak and fragile, although this is generally a distortion, as girls often mature earlier and are often taller and stronger than boys in primary school. The childhoods of girls and boys are structured by discourses of femininity and masculinity and by gendered practices of play, which, as the women tell, teach us to inhabit and experience our bodies in profoundly different ways (Whitson 1984). Cultural practices and surrounding discourses have justified and naturalised such gender differences.

Gendered identities are histo-cultural products and 'gendered subjectivities are embodied by individuals as they grow from childhood into adult sexual identities' (Whitson 2002, p.236). Contemporary society nurtures boys to 'develop physical strength and sports skills, whereas girls are contrasted with the historical construction of femininity as prettiness and vulnerability and other ambiguous messages that are encountered even today by strong active sportswomen' (Whitson 2002, p.236). Boys learn to experience their bodies in an all-encompassing, active and forceful way and learn to transmit power through their entire body, limbs or through extensions such as bats, sticks and clubs. The phrase 'running like a girl' is an example of feminised practice in sport. Young (1980) argues that the partial and apathetic movement patterns of running 'like a girl' derive from discourses and the cultural practices that have constructed the woman to experience her body as an object for others... '*I, I can* and *I cannot* are all embodied experiences, and one's sense of oneself as an active person is developed precisely through experiences of mastering one's body and realising one's intentions in physical movements in and through space' (Young 1980, p.140). Historical discourses, cultural practices and gender-power relations have constructed a normality that disables women in relation to men, particularly in sport.

Discourses have naturalised men's strength and women's weakness and through performativity (the incessant performance of gender) (Butler 1993), have produced men and women to live in active and passive ways (Whitson 2002). An examination of the histories of these gendered assumptions informs my analysis.

Gendered rhetoric, guided by medical opinion, results in culturally constructed differences in gender-power relations in sport. Schools continue to play the gender game (Keen 1992) and openly police performativity of masculine, feminine and heterosexual ideals. Contemporary education can be guilty of 'boying' the boy through masculinising pursuits (Keyworth 2001, p.123) and masculinised practices such as discouraging boys to dance. Body contact sports have been especially naturalised as an aggressive way of doing masculinity (Frank 1991) in which physical domination is legitimised. Sports feminists who have been influenced by Foucault (Cole 1991, 1998; Duncan 1994; Markula 1995, 2000, 2001, 2003) have analysed how physical activity acts as a technology of power that anchors women into a discursive web of normalising practices. Their findings concluded that physical activity is a vehicle of women's domination, as it disciplines women into docile bodies that unquestionably follow discursive routines (Markula 2003, p.88).

Relevant to triathlon, it has been suggested that sport is socially constructed through discourses of performance to celebrate attributes of power, speed and strength (historically symbols of masculinity) as sporting prowess (Hargreaves, 1994). A number of researchers have contended that perhaps more than all other social institutions, sport is permeated by male superiority and female inferiority (Birrell and Cole, 1994, Duncan, 1990, Duncan and Hasbrook, 1988). Some argue (Sherlock, 1997a) that they would like to see the discourses of performance in sport changed. The disputes revolve around the essence of sport and about the defining characteristics (competition, aggression, speed, and strength) that allow certain activities to be classified as sport. It is not adequate, however, to supplement discourses of masculinity with alternative discourses of femininity as this may alter the quintessence of sport (Hall, 1996). Gendered discourses, which, themselves are entrenched in a discourse of power, have led to the presentation of men sports heroes as the norm. This is an important issue in triathlon where, as I will show later, the long distance Ironman is considered the heroic figure. Because of the gendered context of this norm, women playing sport as well as men are seen as aberrant (Ironwoman) and women playing differently from men are seen as inferior (Kennedy

2001). As Hargreaves (1994) suggests, women who play men's sports have constantly to negotiate their status in traditional cultural contexts of men's power and privilege, and in a general discourse of femininity, patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality. A competitive preoccupation with being 'the best' in sport is often a lived reality at an early age, overtly encouraged by the significant others in children's young lives (Sherlock 1997). Adolescents of either gender may already have been normalised into a discourse of masculinised athletic identity. If the women *are* empowered by their sport then can this empowerment become detached from an emphasis on force and domination and can women participate in triathlon according to their own agendas?

Today many medical, government and feminist reports aggressively promote exercise as a positive factor in women's health and wellbeing. These are health discourses; ways of thinking about health. There may be many different ways to define what it is to be healthy but they all have other discourses attached to them. The discourse of 'exercise is good for you' is marketed as a means of improving the physical, social and psychological health of the population. The medical benefits cited are numerous and include the reduced risks of cardiovascular disease, stress, obesity and a preventative measure against osteoporosis. Women have taken up sports as a social experience that, for increasing numbers maybe positive and pleasurable, contributing to increased self-confidence, increased energy levels, team building and general social development. Current feminist research has seen sport as a vehicle for the empowerment of women (Hall, 1996). As I would argue, however, rarely are the discourses and the social pressures of taking part in capitalistic sport questioned or challenged.

Such a challenge would outline the consequences for women's health when the discourse of sport shifts from sport is *healthy* to sport is *unhealthy*. I discuss specific discourses of femininity (slimness, attractiveness, fitness) and discourses of performance (ritualistic behaviour, speed, distance) that emerged from the data that are issues often linked to the active sportswoman's body. I suggest how society's visual expectations of women have cajoled them (and men) into striving for the perfect, toned, athletic body and for some this is an insatiable quest which both empowers but at the same time puts them at risk. Bordo (1993) offers a sceptical attitude toward 'the routes of seeming liberation and pleasure by our culture' (p.26). Sport marketing forcefully employs the symbolism of women's empowerment through the text of the toned, athletic, sexy, body. Media representations show how an

athlete such as Venus Williams has it all, she has her freedom. They often put her down for this, however, as though freedom is not legitimate for a woman. The media rarely tell stories of athletes who have suffered injury or become disabled because of their obsession to exercise.

The next section addresses the discourses of health that emerged from my data as important issues for the woman in sport.

‘The Female Athlete Triad’-a culture bound syndrome

Drinkwater, Grimstone, Cullen and Snow-Harter (1995) suggest that sportswomen who maintain a low body weight to enhance performance or a thin appearance have a tendency to display a triad of illnesses that includes eating disorders, menstrual dysfunction, and osteoporosis (arguably the female athlete triad). ‘The adverse health consequences of low bodyweight in athletes predisposes women to amenorrhoea and irreversible bone loss as well as susceptibility to stress fractures’ (Garner, Rosen & Barry, 1998, p.845). Such statements assume a generic sportswoman and consider only the outcomes, failing to account for holistic explanations. They compartmentalise women and reduce them to statistics. Sherlock (1998) alerts us to the socio-cultural considerations. Existing literature fails to recognise that there is an explanation of what are termed ailments, which lies in the discourses surrounding the woman’s body and sport. I reflect on power-relations and the wider discourses surrounding each woman’s social worlds and consider how she is immersed in a performance-driven society that rewards a narrow Westernised ideal of feminine beauty. There is a contemporary aesthetic ideal for Western women, a panoptican (Foucault 1980) of attractiveness which equates with slenderness the obsessive pursuit of which has become central for many women’s lives. Globally distributed sexualised athletic images of perfect female bodies in film, magazines and advertising act as a form of cultural control, and prompt women to be tormented with a profound sense of inferiority unless they are ‘trim, tight, lineless, bulgeless, and sagless’ (Bordo 1993, p.32). As I will show later, in examples from real lives, these powerful political discourses are potentially dangerous as they can get internalised to the extreme in the maintenance of women’s subjectivities and in turn the body may be materialised as unhealthy. I am discussing discourses of eating, discourses of menstruation and discourses of bone health because they are issues that have emerged in different combinations, and to varying degrees, in the stories of all of the 13 women in my

study. Once again such discourses are historical constructions and so it is important to first establish how they have become established forms of knowledges and truths.

The materialisation of the ‘anorexic’ body as a mental *illness*

Early Western medical discourse proposed that the *illness* ‘anorexia nervosa’ was a mental peculiarity of young women. Implicit in histo-cultural descriptions of eating habits was a desire to be thin. Women and thinness were tied in with positive societal values of spiritual beauty, frailty and romantic identities (very similar to the discourses that surround dance today). It was fashionable for women to be both thin and pale, thus displaying the relationship between women’s appetite and her own sexuality – both demanding control. This discourse acted as a panopticon of women’s eating and histo-culturally gave the label mental illness to ‘anorexia nervosa’. Bordo (1993) considered representations in popular culture of women and men eating and argues that very different gender based attitudes have culturally evolved. The most symbolic food in Victorian England was meat. Meat was gender biased, as it was a man’s prerogative. A ‘proper’ woman avoided meat at the table as in women it was linked to nymphomania and insanity. As Bordo (1993) states, ‘women’s appetites identified with containment and control, whereas male indulgence is legitimated and encouraged’ (p.14).

Deconstruction of Lasegue’s (1873) term ‘*L’anorexie hysterique*’ revealed that it was class based. In the upper classes, a woman could neither be too thin nor too rich and this view was adopted by the emergent European middle class by the end of the nineteenth century. The association of class and weight was socially highlighted. The fashion industry and the media were the main two propagandists. As Wooley, Wooley and Dyrenforth (1979) summarise ‘One of the reasons for the high susceptibility of young people to dieting is the fact that they develop early in life a negative attitude towards obesity, concomitant with increased awareness of the stigma attached to it in society’ (p.81). Relevant to my own study is the idea that to be on a constant diet has been constructed as normality. Discourses surrounding eating are culturally situated and central to a feminist politics of the body. Cultural discourses define what is desirable, what is obscene and what is regarded as an illness. The relentless pursuit of thinness that underlies all unhealthy eating behaviour is the blueprint of what society considers attractive and successful. ‘Anorexics’ believe that they are making themselves more desirable. They also avoid and reject what the culture has defined as negative and have a ‘fat phobia’ rejecting their intense need to eat. In contemporary

consumer society 'we may be *obsessed* with our bodies, but we are hardly accepting of them' (Bordo 1993, p.15). Rather, we are taught to look in the mirror and to read back a message of what is 'wrong' with our bodies.

The language of medicine and science has constructed specific patterns of eating as mental illnesses, perpetuating maladies surrounding women and food. The majority of existing research on eating patterns has been conducted in the medical and psychiatric paradigms (Vereeke West 1998). Clinically, an 'eating disorder' is considered a mental illness that refers to a spectrum of abnormal eating patterns ranging from atypical behaviours to gross disturbances. As 'eating disorders' such as bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa have become common social phenomena, science and medicine have attempted to compartmentalise them into standardised categories

According to a feminist perspective, the medical diagnostic criteria only serve to construct a discourse of dysfunctional women, and the refined medical measurements administered by psychiatrists themselves, have become surveyors (Foucault, 1980) in the process of controlling women's bodies. As I will show, through real women's everyday lives, some women are prisoners of rigid, ritualistic, obsessive lifestyles of compulsive behaviour, ritualistic eating and/or exercise, plus eating and exercise abuse. The discourse of femininity and specifically women's slenderness, for example, has a 'wide range of sometimes contradictory meanings in contemporary representations, the imagery of the slender body suggesting powerlessness and contradiction of the female social space in one context, autonomy and freedom in the next' (Bordo 1993, p.26).

The materialisation of 'unbearable weight' (Bordo 1993)

Contemporary feminist writers 'viewed thinness as a way of resolving the modern woman's inner conflict, torn between desire to conform to old traditional stereotypes of womanhood and the new values related to what a modern woman ought to be' (Nasser 1997, p.1). Research on issues of eating patterns from a histo-cultural feminist perspective (Bordo 1993, Nasser 1997, MacSween 1993, Sherlock 1997) is still outweighed by clinical studies from the medical, physiological and psychological paradigms. Bordo's (1993) analysis of what she still refers to as 'eating disorders' and 'anorexia', explicitly offers one of the few cultural perspectives, and exemplifies a feminist cultural approach to the body. She argues that eating patterns are far from being a superficial fashion phenomenon, but are the result of the 'central ills of our society' (p.139). Bordo portrays these obsessions not as bizarre or anomalous, but

rather as the 'logical (if extreme) manifestations of anxieties and fantasies fostered by our culture' (1993, p.15).

The majority of medically led studies overlook how normalised the obsession with body weight is in our culture. To calorie count or to be on a diet is considered a normal way of life for many women (and men) in the triathlon club. As MacSween (1993) argues:

Anorexia is treated as 'an extended example' of how women both resist and are constrained by the cultural concept of the female body. Anorexia is examined as a strategy of resistance, which ultimately becomes its own prison (1993, p.274).

The strength of her work was in the original interview material used to demonstrate a feminist sociological understanding of women's bodies and 'anorexia'. Nasser (1997) presented one of the few feminist cross-cultural perspectives of eating behaviours. Her work identified that most empirical stances to date on 'eating disorders' have come from a Western perspective. Cultural globalisation has brought a new dimension into the equation and Nasser (1997) aimed to find out whether 'eating disorders' were becoming a global women's phenomenon. Her conclusion was 'that cultural forces are responsible for this modern morbid phenomenon. It is a response to an ambiguous double-bind culture that is felt to be orderly and chaotic, coherent and fragmented, standardised and individualistic' (1997, p.106). A feminist lens may view the medically labelled disorders as not really about weight or eating, but as expressions of culture through the woman using the body as a sign. In my study, an examination of the cultural construction of eating, gender relations and discourses of power could provide another approach to understanding the phenomenon in triathlon.

Bordo (1993) views culture as made up of 'cultural currents or cultural streams' (1993, p.142) and notes how they converge in the disorder of 'anorexia' and find their 'perfect, precise expression in it' (1993, p.142). She describes anorexia's 'synchronicity' with other components of cultural practices. Her control axis (supported by other discourses) was especially relevant to my analysis in Chapter Seven. Bordo (1993) highlights how 'guilt festers into unease with our femaleness, shame over our bodies, and self-loathing' (Bordo, 1993, p.8). She demonstrates how the agnostic experiences of the dualist axis (mind/body) regulates the anorexic's sense of embodiment, as well as other obsessive bodily practices of contemporary culture. She sees 'anorexia' as part of a defence against the 'femaleness' of the body and a

punishment of its desires. Those desires, according to Bordo have 'frequently been culturally represented through the metaphor of the female appetite' (1993, p.8).

I suggest the term 'discourses of eating' materialises women's (and men's) bodies through performativity. In Chapter Seven I will show how some of the women in my study (such as Betty) strive to attain unrealistic goals perceived as the norm of ultimate success without considering life-long health consequences.

The next section reviews relevant research on the discourses surrounding eating in sport, and specifically builds upon Bordo's (1993) work in relation to culturally produced eating behaviours and the athletic sportswoman's body.

Lean mean and faster : going, going gone

Research literature focusing on 'eating disorders' among athletes began appearing in the early 1980s (Costar 1983). Contemporary literature argues that women athletes who are affected by 'eating disorders' are being found with alarming frequency (Sundgot-Borgen 1993). Vereeke-West (1998) however, suggests that 'very few studies have evaluated the prevalence of 'disordered eating' among female athletes' (p.64). The language of medicine and science compartmentalises athletes who have a 'subclinical form of anorexia' to a separate sub-field of the mental 'illness' defined as 'anorexia athletica' (Sundgot-Borgen 1993). Once again this is an example of the discourses of medicine and science framing the woman as dysfunctional and labelling her with an illness which emphasises the human frailties of an otherwise physically strong and powerful female athlete. Existing work has viewed the woman's body in isolation from the complexity of the gendered athletic culture in which discourses of eating manifest themselves. Athletic culture is not cut off from broader society and its ills.

Research is unresolved as to what degree athletic participation contributes to the problem of 'eating disorders' in sportswomen. One argument suggests that participation in certain sports encourage 'pathogenic weight control behaviours' (Vereeke-West 1998) and another viewpoint is that sports attract individuals with 'eating disorders' (Zucker, Avenier, Bayder, Brotman, Moore and Zimmerman 1985). Little research has been conducted in Britain on discourses of eating or 'eating disorders' in physically active females but, according to Black (1991), American 'college athletes are up to six times more likely than the general public to display anorexia or bulimic eating behaviours' (p.2). Black suggests that 'men tend to use more aggressive unhealthy approaches to lose weight such as excessive exercise and

women rely on more passive means such as fasting, self-induced vomiting, and fad dieting' (1991, p.2). Once again the language of science and medicine creates or negates power; the affiliation of aggressive with men and passive with women shows how such physiological literature serves to perpetuate gender-power relations in society and in sport.

Existing medical studies fail to consider the socio-cultural discourses and issues surrounding the female sporting experience (Sherlock 1997). The vast majority of existing empirical data has been collected via postal questionnaires. But deception is inherent when dealing with sensitive issues and the athlete will often deny they do certain things (Brackenridge 2001). Another worry is that the sportswomen may genuinely see their low intakes of food as normal (like Sharon did) and that they are driven to manifest behaviour patterns that could result in outcomes that put their health and even life in danger. Existing research on compulsive exercise does not consider discourses and so fails to include the woman who is surreptitiously exercising behind closed doors, or the reasons behind why she feels driven to follow a gruelling exercise regime as an everyday practice. That discourses are embedded in the *secret* part of a woman's subjectivities suggests alternative research methods such as feminist ethnography may provide researchers with the tools to gain the trust of these women in a non-threatening environment. In my study one of my aims is sensitively to collect accounts of life experiences through in-depth, confidential interviews or diaries.

The new American magazine 'Sports Illustrated for Women' addressed 'eating disorders' in the summer 1999 issue, and gave an in-depth profile of a famous female basketball star. 'Like thousands of women athletes, Shelly Garcia, a basketball player at Colorado, found that her toughest opponent was an eating disorder' (Sports Illustrated for Women, 1999, p.80). The article dealt with Garcia's two and a half-year obsession that nearly ruined her basketball career and her life. It succeeded in giving Garcia voice to indicate the issues in her lifestyle that triggered an unhealthy relationship with food; suffering as a result of her parents' divorce and not living up to the expectations of her father, or the fans. Garcia felt that her female body was 'being judged' all the time. People would comment on her slimmer appearance and automatically equate slimness with health with comments of the following kind: 'you look a lot healthier. You look like you are in good shape' (p.84). This shows how Foucault's notion of the gaze, and self-surveillance is more powerful than any

weighing scale. Our culture does not encourage 'self praise' of the body. Discourses of eating arise out of normalising feminine practices of our culture, 'practices which train the female body in docility and obedience to cultural demands while at the same time being *experienced* in terms of power and control' (Bordo 1993, p.27). I want to discover if there are similar experiences for women in triathlon.

One topic that has often been used to marginalise women in sport is the discourse surrounding menstruation. In my study, issues associated with menstruation also emerged from the women's stories. Histo-culturally menstruation symbolically marks the successful transit into womanhood. The menstruating woman is considered the norm and is valued in our society. This is because in terms of the discourse of reproduction, menstruation marks the woman as potentially fertile but not pregnant. Acclaiming the woman's body as a productive enterprise must, therefore, view menstruation as failure of the system because a baby has not been conceived. In Western society menstrual blood is frequently viewed as a source of pollution (Buckley and Gottlieb 1988) and the internally wounded woman, although functional in the reproductive role, is often portrayed as temporarily dysfunctional for other aspects of her life (such as sex, sport, swimming). A poststructural feminist approach, however, sees the menstruating woman as cultured, able to succeed as a sociologist, a sportswoman, a doctor, part *of* culture, a holistic self who is choosing, competing, striving, dreaming, deciding and actively rejecting the naturalistic discourse. A woman's outbursts are often misinterpreted and labelled as pre-menstrual hysteria rather than a legitimate challenge to discourses of femininity.

A postructural feminist view challenges assumptions that the woman should always be emotionally composed. Feminists would not deny that *some* women do suffer with issues connected with their periods, but question the reputed relationship between women's hormones and definitions of illness. The recent emergence of pre-menstrual stress (PMS) as a psychiatric illness rather than a gynaecological issue raises serious sociological concerns. There is discrimination against women's subjectivities in employment, insurance and other social spheres such as sport and triathlon. A recent example of this discrimination, resulted in the battle of Jane Couch Britain's World Welterweight Champion, with the British Boxing Board of Control (BBBC), and the industrial tribunal that ensued. This unique case, once again highlighted how newspapers and television act as agents in the ideological construction of Victorian femininity. Quotes from the BBBC were featured in the press. The Guardian ran the

headline; - “*Breasts, PMT and the pill bar women from boxing. ... Women should not be licensed to box professionally because pre menstrual tension makes them unstable*” (The Guardian, 13 February 1998, p.4).

Deconstruction of the written text reveals a discourse of femininity which mirrors society's discomfort with women actively choosing careers as professional boxers. The entire BBBC defence was based upon the woman as the reproductive body citing problems in women such as; water retention, lumps in the breasts, pregnancy, contraception and heavy periods. Once again ‘biological arguments were overtly being applied systematically to women's bodies in order to control cultural practices’ (Hargreaves 1997, p.38). A contemporary feminist analysis would argue that syndromes are a cultural reflection of the myths and stereotypes that serve to materialise the woman as naturally abnormal and maladjusted.

The loss of menstruation through physical training is only discussed in medical research (Dale, Gerlarch and Wilhite 1979, Erdelyi 1962) as a negative problem. Any medical dysfunction, which jeopardises a woman's maternal role, may question the individual's capacity as a *real* woman. Sherlock (1997) suggests, however, that some women welcome amenorrhoea as a positive relief. In the women's boxing case previously cited, the BBBC took it for granted that Jane Couch actually menstruated in the first place. It was never a consideration that she may have actively chosen not to. With no monthly cycle the PMT symptoms that were central to their case would not be an issue. Menstruation is often viewed by sportswomen themselves as an inconvenience that has to be kept hidden under brief but functional sporting gear whilst sometimes doing exercise in environments where there are no toilet facilities. Today, with the various contraceptive pills, it is possible for sportswomen who choose to menstruate to tailor their cycles to fit in with key races or games. It could be argued missing periods (excluding those in pregnancy) is a resistance against maternal, domestic femininity.

There is some evidence (Drinkwater, Nilson and Chesunt 1990, Otis, Drinkwater, Johnson, Loucks and Wilmore 1997), however, that the lack of periods for a long length of time may in fact be unhealthy and may lead to osteoporosis. A socio-cultural perspective challenges the status quo and medical approaches that simply treat the established osteoporosis. As I will discuss in Chapter Seven, in depth stories of real lives reveal that some women athletes push themselves in pursuit of a body shape or a subjectivity, often crossing the threshold from *safe* discourses of eating and training to

dangerous discourses of eating and training. Unless empirical studies discover why the women feel that ritualistic behaviours are necessary, and then do something to change the deep-seated discourses behind the actions, debilitating discourses of health will never be totally understood.

It is suggested by physiologists that there is a connection between discourses of eating, amenorrhoea and osteoporosis. Drinkwater, Nilson, Ott and Chesunt (1986) found that 'female athletes' who are amenorrhoeic have reduced bone density and mineral content. Karen, the triathlete who inspired this study, had at 30 a bone density equivalent to a 90-year old. At no point in these medical studies did the researchers look at the women as individuals, or consider any explanations other than the discourse of women's bodies as dysfunctional. Sociologists have clearly neglected these areas and the existing assumptions highlight the 'authority' of science and medicine in our society.

As I stress in Chapter One this research was inspired directly by the work on women's athletic osteoporosis by Sherlock (1997), and Sherlock and Swaine (1995). Sherlock and Swaine's (1995) paper brought to light key socio-cultural issues that had not before been addressed. One of the athletes in their study talked about 'self-destruction, both of her body and as a way of life; the dominance of exercise ... and sexual avoidance: training making her feel powerful ... difficulty in admitting what she had got into: discipline and stress ... overtraining and thinness' (1995, p.16).

To summarise, the cultural values that surround Western women's subjectivities are bound by history. Women's social identities have histo-culturally been as breeding machines, carers and nurturers and have been controlled by the medicalisation of their bodies and gender-power relations that have policed the boundaries of proper women's behaviour. The woman's body is wrapped in power-related descriptive language such as passive or weak, subversive woman's behaviour, rebellion and non-conformity are deemed suspicious and she is socially condemned as 'not being a real woman'. Foucault (1980) shows how culture acts as a panopticon to protect various values such as unquestioned reproductive heterosexual institutions and masculinised sport, thus regulating rather than reflecting identity.

With a few exceptions (Bordo, 1993, Nasser, 1997, MacSween, 1993, Sherlock, 1997) the existing sport related literature clearly illustrates that society is not accustomed to think of what they have labelled as mental illnesses, as feminist political issues, or as histo-cultural products. The majority of existing theories seek a

single cause and few claim that a multiplicity of factors may be involved in the understanding of 'eating disorders', amenorrhoea and osteoporosis as social phenomena. A feminist lens indicates that there is a multiplicity of discourses and explanations rather than rooting the sole cause in the dysfunctional woman's body. Science and medicine assume a core self, however, the performative approach (Butler 1990) shows how identities are the effect rather than the cause of our performances (p.289). Discourses and operations of power have constructed certain knowledge and truth about women's bodies. For example, women's bodies are dysfunctional, thwarted with women's illnesses, disorders and syndromes, and incapable of strenuous physical activity. 'This commonsense knowledge has not been scientifically discovered but produced for particular reasons from particular positions of power' (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.499). Poststructural feminists celebrate the understanding that truth and knowledge are not 'pure' but unstable. Resistance to these social constructions *is* possible. Jane Couch won her battle against the BBBC as all 'medical evidence' that was put forward against her participation was thrown out.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I outlined the theoretical framework that underpinned my research. The discourses that influence gender power relations in the triathlon club will be analysed drawing on poststructural feminist arguments through the lenses of language; discourse; power, resistance, and freedom; knowledge and truth; and the subject (Adams St. Pierre 2000).

When faced with the dilemma of how to conduct the research there were several issues to address; the aims and the focus of the study; feminist methodologies and methods adopted in previous research in related areas; identified strengths and weaknesses of specific feminist methods and techniques; and pragmatics.

This chapter opens with a discussion that focuses upon the task of selecting a research paradigm, it then shows how my theoretical framework translated into a poststructural feminist research agenda. I identify a tension between poststructural research and critical ethnography in terms of emancipatory goals. I acknowledge the work in cultural studies on subcultural theory, and highlight the methodological weaknesses and limitations in the early work on subcultures. Feminist ethnography is then introduced as an alternative research methodology. The following section demonstrates how both subcultural theory and ethnography can be traced as historically constructed knowledge. The main part of the chapter highlights the characteristics and the advantages of doing feminist ethnographic research. I outline why specific feminist methods were employed and problems I encountered whilst conducting this research. I show how feminist research that focuses on women in a mixed gendered setting and in an institution of sport, raises some *different* issues. It raises the question about the *identity* of doing feminist research as well as outlining some of the practical problems that I had to overcome (for example negotiations with gatekeepers and access to the sites; data collection; ethical considerations and writing issues).

As the overall aim of my research was to investigate the extent to which the triathlon club 'constructed, confirmed or contested gender identities' (Flintoff 1997, p.164), ethnography enabled me to understand the culture I was studying (Reinharz 1992, p.69) through total immersion into the setting. As I used to be a club swimmer, I had the skills necessary to produce a legitimate performance in at least one out of the three disciplines of triathlon. I felt my naivety about triathlon served as an advantage as I had no prior knowledge or expectations of the triathlon club I chose as my empirical setting.

In this thesis I call the club Avon. As a novice member, I attended swimming coaching sessions twice a week, socialised, went to races and immersed myself into the triathlon culture. The research from which the empirical data are drawn had 6 phases:

- Pre-fieldwork phase
- A three-year participant observation phase focused on a triathlon club in the South of England, where I trained and socialised with the other members of the club.
- A phase in which in-depth, unstructured interviews were undertaken with *all* the women members (13) in the club at the start of my research in 1998 in order to explore the themes that evolved during the observation phase.
- A second interview phase, where the women drew their social worlds- an idea that had emerged from the first sets of interviews. A number of women also keep diaries.
- Decoding the data and analysis (ongoing throughout the research) and writing up phase
- Education and empowerment phase

As I show in Chapter Two, discourses may be expressed through many social forms and it was important to select a research paradigm which could accommodate the full range. The thesis draws upon observation, interviews and diaries for overall interpretation.

It has been suggested that 'Sport is one of the most significant shapers of collective or group identity in the contemporary world' (Nauright 1996, p.69). Sport is also seen as a socially contested cultural terrain (Donnelly 1993, p.69) with the nationalism and pride of representing a team or country paralleled to the male heroics of war. A feminist analysis however, would deconstruct the power relations that have constructed symbols, traditions, memories and nostalgia, which have helped to define various cultural identities. Sport has traditionally been littered with the signs and symbols of masculine values. The nostalgia and the memories are built from and on men's sporting identities. Many sport sociologists write of the ways that sport can build the identity of groups and individuals, but fail to consider the complexity of gender or address the discourses that are inherent for women in sport. There is a paucity of empirical research that addresses the important intersection of gender or gender relations with sport and its 'subcultures'.

The next section illustrates how much of the existing work that has been conducted on groups of people and specifically athletes has derived from a Cultural Studies perspective and Subcultural Theory. It is important to highlight the characteristics of the

early work on subcultures in order to show how feminist ethnography is more in line with my choice of a feminist poststructuralist paradigm.

Subcultural theory

Modernist theory stressed a series of subcultural styles up to the late 1970s. Pioneering subcultural works were mainly from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham. These include Hall and Jefferson (1976), Willis (1978), Hebdige (1979) and Mungham and Pearson (1978). This masculine representation collectively was seen as defining a new approach to working class youth culture (Waters 1981). Muggleton (2002) recognises that they also display many of the same methodological and theoretical inadequacies that rely on nostalgia, signs and symbols of masculine values where women remain insignificant docile bodies.

Muggleton's (2002) account of reading Hebdige's (1979) work identifies the *difference* between subcultural theory and a poststructuralist view of ethnography. Muggleton (2002) tells how acutely disappointed he felt that the concepts he encountered in Hebdige's (1979) work had absolutely no application to his beloved experiences of the punk rock era. Muggleton (2002) states 'the 'problem' lay not ... in my failure to recognize what had ostensibly been the reality of my situation, but in the way that the book had appropriated its subject matter' (p.2). With the exception of Willis's (1978) ethnography, other subcultural theorists failed to take seriously enough the subjective viewpoints of the young people themselves and therefore lacked indigenous meaning. Evans (1997) stresses 'that 'subcultures' in all their complexity, are generally not studied in any serious, empirical way in cultural studies', she goes on to point out 'it is cheaper to do theory than ethnography, at least in the field of popular culture' (1997, p.185). Muggleton (2002) argues that actually, the problem is deeper, and lies in cultural studies itself. Poststructural feminism challenges its theoretical agenda of the study of (sub)culture because it often relies on big theories or grand narratives (for example Marxism). The social players in the subcultures are depicted as docile bodies of history, 'their lives shaped by grand narrative beyond their control' (Sabin 1999, p.5).

Existing histories of sporting 'subcultures'

There are a number of studies that examine occupational and deviant sport subcultures (Donnelly and Young 1988; Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon 1978) and identify various sport forms and practices as well as the particular cultures they generated (Wheatley 1994)

According to Birrell and Cole (1994), the early ethnographies of sport and leisure were conducted by Polsky (1967) and Scott (1968) succeeded by researchers such as Faulkner (1975) who examined the subculture of men ice- hockey players and Pearson (1979), the subcultural careers of Australian and New Zealand men surfers. Klein (1987) was concerned with the identities of gymnasts, wrestlers, and bodybuilders. Despite these contributions to our comprehension of the 'intersection of sport and culture, few accounts contextualise sport 'subcultures' in the broader social and gender power relations surrounding them' (Birrell and Cole 1994, p.193).

Klein (1987) highlighted the importance of sports ethnography as a valuable and thorough research method, which leads the researcher to learn about the 'cultural viewpoint of the oppressed, their 'hidden' knowledge and resistance as well as the basis on which their 'decisions' are taken' (Flintoff 1997, p 168). Social research on groups shows a slow theoretical shift from the homogeneity of subcultural theory towards a more subjective plurality of the ethnographic paradigm. To date the majority of the existing work has concentrated on men's sporting 'subcultures'. As Wheatley (1990) points out:

The continued neglect and marginalisation of women in subcultural accounts has led to theoretically inadequate conceptualisations of subcultures that both obscure and distort not only how women's social position and experiences feature in the subcultures, but also how prevailing patterns of gender relations severely structure and limit women's social position and experience (p.194).

By examining groups of athletes and cultural struggles, such as those articulated through women's triathlon, we can enhance our understanding of power and gender relations and the limits of women's resistance to our patriarchal social order. Simultaneously, we can begin to assess what potential sport holds for transforming the social order (Wheatley 1994). There are only a few studies that implicitly or explicitly combine the concepts of career and identity with the implication that the act of becoming a member of a particular subculture, is also the act of taking on an appropriate cultural identity (Donnelly 1993, p.224). Donnelly uses the concept of 'the subcultural career' to examine the process of identity *construction* and *confirmation* and explores the notion that identity formation is a deliberate act of identity construction. This is in line with a poststructural feminist conceptualisation that women are not merely passive docile bodies (Foucault, 1980) or victims, but have an *active* role in their own lives (Bordo, 1993). Subcultural studies such as Donnelly's (1993) work fail

to address issues surrounding gender performativity and normalisation. A career in sport is still a masculine concept, and is only now becoming more popular for sportswomen.

Taking on an athletic identity could be seen as taking two distinct steps and in accordance with Donnelly (1993) there are two audiences: the larger culture (for example friends, family, the stranger in the street) and the more important established members of the sub-culture itself. Donnelly (1993) found that new members of a 'subculture' began to adopt mannerisms and attitudes, styles of dress, language and behaviour that they have perceived through a variety of means. This directed my own observation to establish whether there are any such symbolic discourses in triathlon.

Social signs of style

Some existing research suggests that subcultures are created out of and are marked by style. A subcultural style 'consists of a combination of objects, fashion, and ritual used by a cultural group to communicate a distinct image or identity' (Wheatley 1994, p.194). Hebdige (1979) utilises Levis-Strauss's (1966) concept, bricolage, to explain the process by which styles are created through the appropriation of objects from other cultural realms and fitted into a form of collage that generates new meaning for the objects. Together object and meaning constitute a sign, and in any one culture, such signs are assembled, repeatedly, into characteristic forms of discourse, using the same overall repertoire of signs, or when that object is placed in a different ensemble, a new discourse is constituted, a different message conveyed. The generation of subcultural styles, then, involves differential selection from the matrix of the existent. What happens is not the creation of objects and meanings from nothing, but rather the *transformation* and *rearrangement* of what is given (and borrowed) into a pattern which carries a new meaning, its *translation* to a new context, and its adaptation (Wheatley 1994, p.194).

The subcultural bricoleurs appropriate, adapt and subvert a discourse from one cultural context to another and thereby produce new meanings for it. In this capacity, the women's rugby group song repertoire can qualify as a product of subcultural bricolage. Wheatley (1990) examined points of coincidence and difference between the women's rugby subculture and features of lesbian sporting culture(s) as articulated through, and marked by, their distinct subcultural styles. Some researchers accept that subcultures are pliable constructs, where 'the roles and identities of members of a subculture should not be thought of as static positions and identities. They are

constantly undergoing revision and change due to a variety of processes both in and outside the subculture' (Donnelly & Young 1988, p.237). Palmer (1994) argues that 'subculture formation is a result of proximity of similar individuals, or individuals with similar concerns, and the interaction that inevitability occurs between these individuals' (p.12). She investigates the subculture of women's rugby and concludes that because men defined most aspects of that subculture, men's actions provide the yardstick by which the women's perceived acceptance is measured. Desires of affirmation lead women 'to adopt masculine behaviours that in other circumstances would not be seen as appropriate or welcome' (Palmer 1994, p.12). Wheatley (1990) suggests that these behaviours serve to separate and distinguish their cultural form and are carried out through various traditions and practices that are neither determined nor defined by men. She states:

The women's version of rugby disrupts the male, heterosexual hegemony of the rugby sub-culture by exposing female physical capability in a typically male enclave, while openly expressing a distinct identity and lifestyle through its social proclivities (p.207).

Wheatley's (1990) work suggests that women rugby players may live two contrasting identities; on the one hand the women's rugby subculture enables its participants to cultivate an alternative but nevertheless socially dictated gender prescription. Alternatively, women's rugby was found to be a style that challenged the symbolic discourses and constructs of women to be ladylike.

The postmodern/poststructural 1980s and 1990s have been 'decades of subcultural fragmentation and proliferation, with a glut of revivals, hybrids and transformations, and the co-existence of myriad styles at any one point in time' (Muggleton 2002, p.47). Recently the study of subcultures has developed a more subjective approach, however, theory still retains its privileged position over ethnography. In cultural studies ethnographic evidence on the lives of the individuals is treated less as a representation of their subjective experiences than as an expression of their 'subjectivities'. These include the text, discourses, frameworks and social positions *through which* their lived reality is 'spoken' (Muggleton 2002, pp.3-4).

The Post-subculturalists

Muggleton's (2002) situated case study is a unique view of what he still calls a subculture, but in a wider consideration of postmodernism and cultural change. Drawing upon extensive interviews with people who dress in what may be deemed as a

stylishly unconventional manner, he seeks 'to establish whether contemporary subcultures display modern or postmodern sensibilities and forms' (p.199). By giving voice, through listening to the voices of the subcultural stylists themselves, Muggleton (2002) gleans their subjective perceptions of their style and the ideas that lie behind them. He gives us empirical insights into issues of subjectivities and the thoughts of individuals.

'Post-subculturalists no longer have any sense of the subcultural 'authenticity' where inception is rooted in particular socio-temporal contexts and tied to underlying structural relations' (Muggleton 2002, p.47). The post-subculturalists could, therefore, be seen to have the agency of subcultural choice. Whereas earlier subcultures existed with 'members maintaining strong stylistic and ideological boundaries through expressed comparisons with other groups', in poststructuralism, the 'boundary maintenance becomes negligible as the lines of subcultural demarcation dissolve' (Muggleton 2002, p.47). In line with Kellner (1992) post-subcultural identities are multiple and fluid. Subcultural style is consumed through free-floating signifiers, and post-subculturalists become 'Style Surfers' (Muggleton 2002) who are able to try on and cast off identities.

As Evans (1997) argues the very concept of subculture is becoming less applicable in postmodernity/poststructuralism. The fragmentation of mass society means that there is no coherent dominant culture against which a subculture can express its resistance. In capitalist consumer society, however, distinct groups of young people are used to market products. For example, Kellogg's used a group of young snowboarders to advertise 'Frosties'. Aligning a brand name with 'cool subjectivities' it invites the consumers to buy 'coolness' (if they cannot skate like them they can at least eat like them). As Beezer (1992) concludes 'without this surface difference, subcultures slip from view, to the point where their existence can be thrown into question' (p.113).

Muggleton (2002) openly concedes that one of the limitations of his work is that he has neglected the importance of gender and only provided a one sided and partial understanding of subcultural phenomena. His work, however, already argues the importance of giving voice to the young people, by listening to their version of alternate knowledges and truths. I saw how a feminist appropriation of Muggleton's (2002) ideas could be useful for my own ethnography in the triathlon club.

Feminist research approaches

Feminist scholarship and research (Scruton and Flintoff 2002, Fenstermaker and West 2002, Wright 2000a) acknowledges that social life is constructed by gender power relations that oppress women. It is committed to changing this, placing an emphasis on women's empowerment and autonomy, and replacing sexist intellectual traditions with a feminist paradigm (a shared intellectual view of the world) (Grace 1997, p.17). The relationship between epistemology and methodology is at the centre of feminist critiques. Stanley and Wise (1993) explain epistemology as:

A framework or theory for specifying the constitution and generation of knowledge about the social world; that is, it concerns how to understand the nature of 'reality'. A given epistemological framework specifies not only what 'knowledge' is, but who are 'knowers', and by which means someone becomes one, and also the means by which competing knowledge-claims are adjudicated and some rejected in favour of another/others (p.188).

The assumptions which underpin the whole research process, are referred to as the 'methodology; which is the theory and the analysis of how research should be undertaken (Harding 1986, p.2). The focus of transforming intellectual and cultural practices that subordinate *women* distinguishes poststructural feminist scholarship from other social and political theory in the broader paradigm of poststructural theory. A feminist researcher's treatment of methodological issues, for example the relationship between the researcher and the research subjects, will be guided by their epistemological stance. Method, as we shall discuss later, is the actual practical technique employed in gathering research data such as interviewing or keeping diaries.

The selection of a research paradigm

Knowing where to start the story is not as easy as it seems. Logically it could begin when the research began, but the trail needs to go back further to include some of my own ethnographic stories of being physically active. I come from a supportive middle class background and participated in a number of sports as a child in the 1970s. I developed physical competence very easily and it felt empowering to be able to represent my county at several different sports and to play basketball for England. I quickly became aware, however, that gender power relations in sport were discriminatory. I remember vividly how frustrating it was as an elite woman athlete in an arena where dominant discourses favoured men. Only later did I see the significance of being taught basketball and most other sports from the perspective of white middle-

class, able-bodied, heterosexual men, or being refused entry to the football team because 'girls didn't play football'. Although my own experiences of sport allowed me to have an added confidence in my own body, I was also aware that this was not the case for all the girls in my class. Many had very negative relationships with their bodies and exposure to physical education only made things worse. As a researcher I wanted to understand how power operates in sport, and how women's bodies are materialised in discursive cultural practices. I wanted to make a difference to women's lives through praxis-oriented research. I am aware however, of my own impact on the research process. An unavoidable part of the research was that my own subjectivities and beliefs influenced my presentation of the research findings. Locating oneself in the research is vital in poststructural feminism that focuses on issues of power. As a white, middle class, postgraduate, heterosexual, able-bodied woman I realise that I held a position in this research that may be criticised as perpetuating a white woman's knowledge. I have not until this research interrogated my own whiteness, able bodiedness, middle classness, or analysed what a privileged position I hold. I identify that the data collection and interpretation of the findings was a form of knowledge creation to which I was intrinsically linked.

Scruton and Flintoff (2002) suggest theory is 'only useful if it *informs* political action and practice and if it is also *developed out of* these' (p.3). My aim is to relay my findings back to the triathlon club and highlight to the sportswomen how resistance *is* possible and how individuals can open up new possibilities for emancipatory action.

My commitment to feminism and doing feminist research initially threw up more questions than it solved. It was not until I had completed the fieldwork and now am on my second attempt at writing the thesis, that 'I am able to be clearer about where my research 'fits' in relation to the umbrella of well-established debates on feminist research' (Flintoff 1997, p.165). Like Flintoff (1997) whilst actually doing the fieldwork, 'I experienced considerable uncertainty about what I was doing or where I was going! Reassuringly, this is not an uncommon situation for beginning researchers' (Flintoff 1997, p.165). At first I made the mistake of trying to tie my research paradigm down too tightly. I now realise that poststructural, liberal, radical and postmodern feminists share the same ontological position that supports the belief that 'realities' exist and they are constructed in ways that oppress women (Macdonald et al. 2002, p.145).

Feminist research is transdisciplinary. There are many feminist methodologies, and each looks at the social world through a different lens for viewing and understanding human activity (Sparkes 1994). The difference lies when an individual feminist researcher seeks to answer different types of questions about physical education or sport. 'They may arrive at answers to their questions by employing different methods for gathering information (data collection) and deciphering this information (data analysis)' (Laker 2002, p.36).

When selecting a research paradigm I could see how existing poststructural feminist research (Scruton and Flintoff 2002, Butler 1990, Francis 2002) has made a significant contribution to understanding how social practices affect gender relations in physical activity settings such as discussed by researchers like Connell (1995), Kenway and Willis (1997) and Wright (1995).

This research on gender in sport is influenced by poststructuralism because I wanted to 'make visible what has been invisible' and to provide 'new ways of seeing, and therefore acting, and thereby makes a difference' (Macdonald, Kirk, Metzler, Nilges, Schempp and Wright 2002, p.144). I designed my theoretical, methodological and analytical frameworks around a feminist analysis of power and discourse. As Reinharz (1992) states 'feminist research is guided by feminist theory' (p.240). The feminisms supply the perspective, epistemology and ontology, and the setting and discipline guide the feminist methods. I now will explain how my poststructural feminist theoretical framework translated into a poststructural feminist research agenda.

A poststructural feminist research paradigm

'As a theoretical perspective, poststructuralism does not immediately suggest a methodological practice, so different researchers have taken up the perspective in different ways' (Macdonald et al. 2002, p.143). Feminist research however, has not been uncritically accepted (Hall 1996). As Macdonald et al. (2002) state: '... for the intent and credibility of feminist research to be maintained, it must recognise not only the subjectivities of participants but also the inherent intersubjectivity between the researcher and the researched' (p.147). Stanley (1990) argues that credible research grounded in feminist theory must be unalienated. In this work I have ensured that my own thinking and conduct are grounded in the study. As Macdonald et al. (2002) state 'the act of coming 'to know' is treated as critically as 'what is known'. Therefore, the investigation that has traditionally been viewed as biased might be more accurately equated with good feminist research' (p.147).

Most data-led or empirical poststructuralist feminist research draws on qualitative methodologies, although there is room for quantifiable data. Qualitative data collection captures the complexities of diverse women's lives through the construction of discourses. As Macdonald et al. (2002) argue 'Poststructuralist research goes beyond the rejection of positivistic assumptions to investigate how selves and social relations are constituted in particular relations of power-knowledge' (p.142).

The qualitative paradigm embraces the articulation of discourses through rich data collected in a multiple methods design that reflects individuals' subjectivities. This multiple methods approach was valuable, as through interviews, diaries and participant observation it was possible to analyse the construction of gender power relations. Documentary evidence and interviews gave insights into the creation and implementation of gender equity in the triathlon club studied. In addition to multiple methods, the qualitative paradigm enabled the creation of a dynamic relationship between data and research design (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). The distinctive characteristics of the qualitative paradigm played an integral part in shaping my poststructural feminist research design.

Poststructuralism has displaced the subject as conscious, rational and coherent, pointing to a variety of different subjectivities and realities. It has challenged the materialist, determinist and structuralist mode of explanation for social phenomena and emphasised representation, symbols and language. As Macdonald et al. (2002) suggest 'choices in language as social practices provide indicators to those discourses being drawn upon by writers and speakers and to the ways in which they position themselves and others' (p.143).

Feminist poststructuralist researchers tend to use a selection of research methods to investigate how language constructs a system of meaning and subjectivities. Examples of empirical feminist poststructuralist research are: Clarke (1997) who studied how lesbian PE teachers manage their subjectivities at school and in their social life; Webb and Macdonald (2000) who analysed the gendered discourses associated with school structures, the body, family, and physical activity. Another study that draws upon feminist postmodern/poststructuralist resource as a theory is that of Hickey, Fitzclarence and Matthews (1998) who examined the discourse of masculinity and its impact upon boys and physical education.

So, what distinguishes poststructural feminist research from interpretative or socially critical research? The difference is the *kinds* of questions which drive the planning of

the research, the collection of the data and the interpretation and conclusions drawn from the analysis. As Macdonald et al. (2002) state 'a poststructuralist researcher is not primarily interested in data as constructing a particular reality' (p.143) (for example women's experience of triathlon), as would be the case with interpretative research. The poststructural feminist researcher would focus upon the discursive resources. For example, in order to understand the triathlete's experiences, I will look at the notions of femininity or masculinity in the club, family and friends, cultural practices or in the media. The data collected is a reflection of the discourses the sportswomen draw 'on to constitute themselves as subjects and the consequences of this in terms of power and their social and cultural positioning and responses' (Macdonald et al. 2002, p.143).). Other examples of research on sport or physical education in a poststructuralist paradigm are Gard and Wright's (2001) investigation of obesity discourses in physical education (PE), and Nilges' (2000) study of gender as a non-verbal discourse in educational gymnastics. Other studies that also influenced my research design and answered some of the problems I was facing whilst doing the research were Wright, Macdonald & Wyn (2001), Gore (1995) and Wright (2000b).

Wright et al. (2001) considered the place and meaning of physical activity in young people's lives. They asked the following questions:

How do young people from different cultural and social locations shape their identities and social relations in the context of the cultural and institutional discourses around physical activity, bodies and health which currently have prominence in Australian society and in school physical education programs? (p.3).

Using a different approach, Gore (1995) observed social practices across different pedagogical sites to determine how these practices worked as technologies of power to position the participants. He observed normalising, regulating, classifying and surveillance effects. Wright (2000a) draws upon this work to analyse the way in which language, as a social practice, comes to constitute particular embodied subjectivities and social relations in PE lessons. These studies raised important questions for me, for example; how do cultural practices construct, confirm and contest subjectivities, social relations, and the construction of power-knowledges in the triathlon club?

As I discussed in Chapter Two, in order to understand the discourses working in the setting, it is necessary to analyse the operation of power in constructing knowledge. How are certain truths systematically constituted? Examples of poststructuralist feminists who have addressed the discursive construction of physical education are

Wright (1996), Wright et al. (2001), Clarke (1998) and Scruton and Flintoff (1992). These works also ask valuable questions that I could build upon in my research when interrogating the discursive practices of triathlon such as: how do the cultural and institutional discourses around physical activity, bodies and health shape women's embodied subjectivities?

Fundamental to poststructuralist and postmodern paradigms is the acknowledgement of a distinctive epistemological and ontological position that requires a great deal of reflexivity about how the research is conducted and what interpretations can be made (Macdonald et al. 2002). Like critical, interpretative, and postmodern perspectives, feminist poststructuralism disowns notions of a reality that is fixed and a humanist/modernist opinion of the rational autonomous meaning-making individual. In place of the development of societies as an onward movement of progress, poststructuralism focuses on the specifics of time and space and localised struggle. In the consideration of poststructuralism's contribution to feminism, there has been recognition of its conflict with emancipatory ideals in its concern to emphasise *difference* and the *particular* (Humphries 2000, p.184). Although there *are* some tensions present between poststructural (Kirk 1997) and emancipatory (Wright 1996) feminist research, emancipatory aims are *not incompatible* with feminist ethnographic research (Francis 2002).

As was discussed earlier, poststructural feminisms have rejected the notions of 'truth discourses' and 'grand narratives' and 'individuals are coherent selves' (Francis (2002, p.46), and instead, advocates research that deconstructs such discourses. Such an approach does not tell people (for example liberal feminists) to abandon work creating more equal participation opportunities in sport, but it does 'deconstruct the foundational conceptions of morality, justice and truth on which many such movements are based' (Francis 2002, p.46). As Francis (2002) highlights, this does pose a challenge for many feminists, who support the 'truth discourse' that women *are* disadvantaged, marginalised and discriminated against in contemporary culture and specifically in sport. As feminists we know that this oppression is unjust and that we should work to end it (Francis 1999b). Where there is power there is resistance, however, and as my work shows women in contemporary society are beginning to consciously free *themselves* through transgressive practices that counter the dominant discourses of power.

To 'empower' is a metaphor similar to Derrida's notion 'to enlighten' (Humphries 2000, p.185). This positions the emancipators however, as senders of light and the receivers as passive docile bodies (Foucault 1977). Foucault argues that there may be some projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to 'loosen, or even break them, but none of these projects can simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty ... Liberty is a *practice*' (Foucault 1993, p.162). An emancipatory intent is not a guarantee of an emancipatory outcome. Martin's (1996) descriptions of experiences of feminist participatory research return again and again to this contradiction. In her attempts to share power as a researcher, she is inevitably positioned as powerful.

The issue of the will to power (Willis and Trondman 2000) has been less overt in positivistic approaches to research. Issues of power have been resolved in the greater reliability of research instruments or in the application of ethical standards. It is in the critiques of 'traditional methods' (Humphries 2000, p.185), for example Oakley (1974) or Reinharz (1992) that power relations have been centralised and alternate discourses debated. Williams (1993) highlights the differences among feminists in the debate over power. Oakley (1974, 1981) and McRobbie (1982), both recognise the complex dynamics of researcher-researched relationships, but while the former sees close kinship between the women researchers and women subjects of research, the latter is concerned that women's willingness to talk to researchers is an index of their powerlessness. Taking yet another view, women as a group are powerless, whether they are researchers or subjects of research, and it is precisely this which underlines kinship (Oakley 1981).

The challenges of poststructuralism lead us to ask whether we can appeal to a metanarrative of emancipation whilst retaining a concern with the particular and the local? (Humphries 2000, p.187). McNay (1992), from a feminist perspective, has struggled with this and she concludes:

... feminists cannot afford to relinquish either a general theoretical perspective, or appeal to a metanarrative of justice. I contend that gender issues cannot be fully comprehended without an understanding of general social dynamics, nor can gender oppression be overcome without some appeal to the metanarrative of justice (p.7).

Both Lather (1992) and Harding (1986), although from different starting points, argue that the greatest resource for would-be-knowers is our 'non-essential, non-naturalizable, fragmented identities and the refusal of the delusion of a return to 'original unity'' (Harding 1986, p.193). They argue for a throwing off of the 'regimes of truth',

whatever form they take. It must be possible to recognise the particularities of struggle without abandoning metanarratives of emancipation and justice.

As a researcher, my own commitment to self-reflexivity was fundamental, although some suggest this can deteriorate into self-indulgence that places the researcher as the norm. In my case as I had never *lived* as a triathlete before the study, I had no prior personal triathlon 'norms' to measure the women's subjectivities against. A self-critical account that places the researcher at the centre of the text can perpetuate the dominance our emancipatory intentions hope to fight. Our own frameworks need to be interrogated, as we look for the tensions and contradictions in our research practice, paradoxically aware of our own complicity in what we critique. This, I think lays the groundwork for praxis-oriented research which can open up new possibilities for emancipatory action.

The analysis of histories is key to understanding gender power relations. Whitson (1990) suggests this is because individuals tend to privilege certain histories and events. A flaw of critical theory is that many diverse historical voices have been ignored in the attempt to analyse history as a whole.

I realise that there are many possible feminist approaches to doing research. By critiquing the literature on feminist research, however, I saw how a ethnographic research paradigm would best suit the triathlon club setting and create an opportunity for me to give voice and visibility to women in triathlon and sport. Being a new researcher, I first concentrated on the material that told me *how* to do ethnographic research (for example Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, Hammersley 1989, Willis 2000) which, although I criticise them for having no feminist voice, did had useful points that I could retheorise. I also drew upon feminist research literature (Stanley and Wise 1993, Reinharz 1992, Clarke and Humberstone 1997, Scraton and Flintoff 2002) which highlighted what makes research feminist and how feminist research differs from other methods. In this research both the doing and the writing of fieldwork are intertwined with gender (as well as with other cultural and bodily markers) such as age, class, ethnicity, or sexuality.

Smyth and Shacklock (1998) argue that researchers need to be able to locate their study in the context of the histories that lie behind the research tradition on which they have drawn. The next section answers the question what is ethnographic research? I briefly trace its historical roots and show how it is not ethnography per se that makes it feminist, rather ethnography in the hands of feminists (Reinharz 1992). I then focus on

contemporary feminist ethnography showing justifications as to its importance in feminist social science.

Ethnographic research

What is ethnography?

Ethnography is a powerful research tool that can contribute to the positive development of reflexive forms of social theorising. It is an established research practice in a variety of disciplines with their own internal histories (for example sport), most prominently in anthropology. According to Willis and Trondman, (2000) ethnography is a 'family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms, the irreducibility of human experience' (p.5). The centrality of 'culture' is central to ethnography in the broad sense of how imperative it is for all social groups to find and make their own roots, routes and 'lived' meanings in society, eroding inherited cultures and inciting them to re-establish themselves in new forms. Bourdieu (1999) argues that 'the social body is the site for experience engaging in a corporeal knowledge' that provides a practical comprehension of the world quite different from the act of conscious decoding that is normally designated by the idea of comprehension' (p.135). Willis and Trondman, (2000) argue that a central part of ethnographic research is the understanding and representation of 'experience' (p.6). They see experience as anchored in two important contexts:

Firstly, are the symbolic forms, patterns, discourses and practices which help to form it and to give it shape, so that the ethnographic enterprise is about presenting, explaining and analysing the culture(s) which locate(s) 'experience'. Second and more widely, for us the best ethnography also recognizes and records how experience is *entrained* in the flow of contemporary history, large and small, partly caught up in its movement, partly itself *creatively* helping to maintain it, *enacting* the uncertainty of the eddies and gathering flows dryly recorded from the outside as 'structures' and 'trends' (p.6).

Poststructuralist and postmodern critiques have challenged the assumption of *ethnographic authority* pointing to a discursive naivete in ethnographic writing which is unconscious of the way it writes (Clifford and Marcus 1986) and *makes* culture rather than discovering or reflecting it (Willis and Trondman 2000). In order to achieve an ethnographic account that assumes an active centred agency, my thesis will be a theoretically informed feminist ethnographic study. As ethnography has its roots in anthropology and implies living in, and becoming a member of a culture, empirical

research often entails longitudinal studies that observe an intact natural group in a natural setting. I could only achieve sustained immersion in the club setting and socials. In organisations, however, an ethnography can be described as ‘predominantly concerned with those social relations coalesced around the subset of goal orientated activities ... People interact with each other according to this action and meaning subset for the duration of the specialised activity’ (Rosen 1991, p.3). By utilising feminist ethnographic methods in the triathlon organisation it was possible to analyse the discourses that contributed to the construction of gender power relations and the materialisation of bodies over a three-year period.

Feminist research has been criticised for its lack of ethnographic studies, however, as we have cited earlier there is a number of existing ethnographies, but few focussing on British sports clubs. Feminist ethnographic research often offers a challenge and a sense of freedom to feminist researchers. If feminist ethnography *is* underrepresented then it could be for a number of reasons, such as access to the settings or the time or funding involved for such studies. Reinharz (1992) questions whether there *are* substantially fewer feminist ethnographies, rather ‘we have been slow in weaving the connections among the studies that exist and therefore deficient in reaching grounded understanding of what feminist ethnography actually is’ (p.75). The challenge for a feminist ethnographer is to utilise the potential of fieldwork in order to get closer to women’s multiple realities.

As Reinharz (1992) states ‘feminist theory and research methods involve questions about *identity* (what are feminist research methods?) and *difference* (what is the difference between feminist research methods and other research methods and, how do feminist research methods differ from each other?)’ (1992, p.3). There is no space within the confines of this thesis to illustrate all feminist research methods (see Reinharz 1992). The main point to emphasise is that there is no *one* way to do feminist research. ‘Feminist research practices must be recognized as pluralities’ (Reinharz 1992, p.4). As Macdonald et al. (2002) argue ‘Interpretative, socially critical, postmodern/poststructuralist and feminist researchers often share theoretical space when the topic of study directly relates to gender’ (p.145). As a beginner feminist researcher trying to find a way through the methodological jungle, I found this quote from Warren and Hackney (2000) very useful:

Go into the field, and live, and think, and write. Listen to what we others have said, but do not let our voices become too much the

shapers of yours; it is not any researcher who produces a particular ethnography – it is you (p.65).

When planning my own research design I was reliant upon advice from other feminist researchers for examples. As Klein (1987) argues doing feminist research requires transparency in all stages making visible why we do what we do and how we do this. The self-disclosure reveals the extent to which the researcher has learned about herself and it helps to instruct the reader into similar work (p.74). As Reinharz (1992) concludes, 'Rather than there being a 'woman's way of knowing' or a 'feminist way of doing research', there are instead 'women's ways of knowing' (1992, p.4). Reinharz (1992) states in feminist ethnography: 'The written text that emerges from the study is a blend of writing about the self, the group studied and the methods by which the group was studied, or ... 'person, problem and method' (Reinharz 1992, p.74).

Contemporary *Feminist Ethnography*

So, with these pluralities in mind feminist ethnography could be described as:

research carried out by feminists who focus on gender issues in woman homogenous traditional or nontraditional settings, and in heterogeneous traditional or nontraditional settings. In feminist ethnography, the researchers are women, the field sites are sometimes women's settings, and the key informants are typically women (Dilorio 1989, p.49).

The question of *difference* is at one with the question of *identity*. This is becoming important for feminist theorising in various disciplines including social science research methods as feminists begin to question and challenge the implicit masculine perspective of the dominant paradigms, methodological structures, and theoretical assumptions (Bologh 1984, p.388).

As we discussed in Chapter Two, the impact of the 'difference' debates in contemporary poststructural feminism has allowed for a more fluid theory of gender in the sociology of sport. Gender is seen as a continuum, relational and dynamic. Those research paradigms which continue to define masculinity and femininity as separate entities ignore the process by which power relations between men and women are constructed, negotiated and contested (Messner and Sabo 1990, p.13). Poststructural feminist research argues that diversities in race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, religion and ablism are considered (Hall 1996, Scraton and Flintoff 2002). There is a necessity to research around difference in order to understand difference (Scraton 1994). In order to understand difference and sportswomen we need to explore the leisure worlds and

sports organisations they inhabit. Scraton (1994) states 'It is only by starting from everyday experiences that we will be able to recognise the importance of difference and the significance of shared experiences' (p.258). Dilorio (1989) supports this and argues why feminist ethnography is an alternative focus of social science:

Feminist fieldwork is predicated upon the active involvement of the researcher in the production of social knowledge through direct participation in and experience of the social realities she is seeking to understand ... however, feminist field researchers add (another dimension) which is not included as a part of conventional field methods ... the *necessity of continuously and reflexively attending to the significance of gender* as a basic feature of all social life and ...*understanding the social realities of women as actors* whom previous sociological research has rendered invisible (p.49).

Dilorio (1989) suggests that ethnographic research could reform the patriarchal assumptions of the sociology of sport. Most importantly, ethnographic research could enable us to 'ascertain which girls and women engaging in what forms of physical activity under what conditions develop and affirm what identities through what processes' (p.49). Such studies rely on the researcher's immersion in social settings, and aim for intersubjective understanding between researcher and the women being studied (Reinharz 1992, p.46). Griffin (1985) conducted some of the earliest critical research in sports pedagogy when she examined sex equity and pupils' participation styles in physical education lessons. Scraton's (1989) school-based study focuses on girls, the relationship of gender and physical education. Flintoff (1993) investigates the extent to which teacher education institutions construct confirm, or contest gender identities in PE. Humberstone (1986, 1990) explores the impact of gender in coeducational outdoor activity settings.

Other existing empirical studies in specific subcultures of sport include Wheaton and Tomlinson (1998) who looked at the gender order through a participant observation of a windsurfing subculture. Miller and Penz (1991) focussed on how female body builders had colonised a weightlifting gym that was considered a male preserve. Mansfield and Maguire (1999, 2000) analysed the empowerment of women through a gym culture. Theberge's (1985) participant observation was in a women's ice hockey team in Canada. Brackenridge (1997) conducted a study that addressed sexual abuse in sport. Shaw and Slack (2002) adopt some ethnographic principles in their empirical research that looks at the construction of gender relations and the culture of British sports

organisations. To date however, there are no empirically based feminist ethnographic accounts that focus on women in British triathlon clubs.

Reinharz (1992) suggests that contemporary feminist ethnographers often cite three goals of their research; firstly to document the lives and activities of women, to understand the experience of women from their own point of view, and also to conceptualise women's behaviour as an expression of social contexts.

As discussed in the last section, histories of various social lives gathered through ethnography have been encased in gendered assumptions. Poststructural feminist research plays an important role in lifting the androcentric blinkers in the existing ethnographic accounts of sport that have primarily been from a masculine perspective and have trivialised the thoughts and activities of women. Women are often categorised in relation to men in terms of real, ideal or valued criteria. Understanding women's experiences through their *own* voices corrects a major bias of non-feminist participant observation (Reinharz 1992, p.52). One of the ways in which feminist ethnographers such as Stacey (1987), Smith (1989), Ellis (1986) and Goldberg (1983) attempted to understand women's experiences was to have women as key informants. Although feminist fieldworkers usually focus on women, I collected rich data in the triathlon club by observing both sexes in order to understand gender performativity (Butler 1993).

Particular field sites are accessible to women ethnographers that are neither accessible nor interesting to men ethnographers. Although the club was a mixed setting, there were some women only sub-settings. By virtue of being a woman for example, I had access to the women's changing room, where I witnessed what McDade (1983) described as 'symbolic markers' (p.14). These markers were consumer products such as tampons, bras, deodorant, make-up and other intimate details of hygiene aides and routines. It was a space where I got to know the women well enough to talk to them personally. As the swimming sessions were segregated on ability, the lanes mixed gendered and the swimming nearly constant, changing time was the only available time in the evening when the women got to talk with each other.

Reinharz (1992) discusses how young feminist researchers may face certain obstacles in mixed gender settings because they are women in a heterosexist, sexist and ageist society. Some women ethnographers have been subjected to sexual harassment (Deegan (1989), Browne (1976), Golde (1970)) because heterosexual males saw them as available for sexual conquest (p.58). Reinharz (1992) continues to suggest that both men and women in the setting may unwittingly put the researcher into alternative roles.

For example 'a daughter to be protected, a non-daughter-non-sex-object woman to be ignored, a nurse/mother who will care for them, a lesbian of limited interest to men, a teacher, or some other conventional stereotype' (p.58). The feminist ethnographer must decide how to stay in the setting without collaborating in these roles. The researcher cannot or should not try to control the setting (a very positivistic assumption) and to have times of perceived failure in the field is all part of the research process, however, it more importantly reflects the gender power relations and should be recorded as data.

Reflexivity in the feminist research process

Cook and Forno (1991) argue that reflexivity is the assertion of feminists to reflect upon, examine critically, and explore analytically the research design and process (p.2). All aspects of my own research process was important, as it all affected the way that knowledge produced by the research was constructed (Scruton and Flintoff 2002). Clarke and Humberstone (1997) suggest that reflexivity is 'a source of insight as well as a means of opening up the research process' (p.31), whereas Stanley and Wise (1993) stress that emotionality is an aspect of reflexivity for the researcher.

My own experiences made me realise reflexivity was one of the most important aspects of feminist ethnographic research. For example, early on in the research when themes had already started to emerge I interviewed Martha. She seemed to trust me from the start because intimate information soon started to flow. What she was telling me was potentially so rich I decided earlier than I had anticipated that she should keep a diary.

I was constantly examining and re-examining conversations, interviews, and data to see if my initial reaction to them was an accurate interpretation. Even now as I am writing up I am still trying to make sense of it all. Ongoing reflexivity during my work has made me aware of how much this research process has raised my own consciousness of triathlon, of the women's lives, and of the various discourses that serve to construct, confirm and constrain women in sport. Reflexivity in analysis forced me to engage with an intense array of feminist literature that in turn has lifted me to a new theoretical position from which to analyse and articulate my findings.

As a new researcher, I initially designed my feminist research as a neatly packaged six-phase framework. As I began to live out this plan and began to understand the difference and identity of feminist ethnographic research, this raw outline needed to be modified in ways that I subsequently describe. Table 1 below, shows that although (mainly for the purpose of explanation) I kept the phases of research, in reality, the

boundaries between various phases were blurred. The emphasis and priorities constantly changed but many aspects were ongoing throughout the research and were addressed simultaneously, or revisited.

Table 1: The research timetable as a fluid guideline

<p>Pre-fieldwork phase: Theoretically formulating the research problem, aims of the research, feminist ontology, and subsequent research design to suit the setting and the questions. 4 week <i>practice scenario</i> – access the club, build rapport, settling into my new setting.</p> <p><i>(From this point onwards there were no set boundaries, it was impossible to designate headings to a space or to a time scale, as the research process was so fluid, reflexive and dynamic).</i></p> <p>Three year ethnography: the participant as observer – the research underway but always reflexive, collection of data and analysis as an ongoing process. – An overt researcher role, guiding conversations, continuing to build rapport, and acceptance as primarily a fellow athlete and secondly a researcher. Identifying key players for interviews and diaries. Deconstructing the club website and newsletters. Ethical considerations. Coding practices.</p> <p>Interview phase: Woman to woman interviews, social events, attending races and training weekends. Starting to identify individuals to keep diaries. Attending International training camp. Follow up interviews. Coding and analysing data as an ongoing process.</p> <p>Second interview phase: Women drew their social worlds. Key informants started their diaries. Coding and analysing data as an ongoing process.</p> <p>Analysis phase: Final consolidation of analysis. Writing up.</p> <p>Phase six: Feedback of my findings to the club. Education. Empowerment.</p>

I empathise with Grace (1997) when she described how the critical analysis of the research *process* itself was an important part of the project and was central to her attempt to operate in a feminist framework. I now attempt to draw out insights gleaned and some of the contradictions I faced when working through a feminist ethnographic methodology and subsequent feminist research methods (the actual practical techniques (interviewing, diaries) employed in gathering research data). It is a personal account that critically reflects on the process of the research and how I have operated in it.

Pre-fieldwork phase

I found the creation of a pre-fieldwork phase invaluable as it allowed me time to formulate the theoretical and methodological framework of the study. It also allowed me to find a unique focus for my study. As a novice feminist researcher, I needed this time to digest the literature on feminisms and specifically feminist ethnographic research. By reading other feminist research stories I identified possible research problems and debated and finally resolved ethical issues.

What I underestimated, and what was not reflected in research literature were the differences between designing a participant observation and its complexities and challenges in reality. To repeat myself, one of the main lessons that I learnt from the moment I joined the club was how the importance of reflexivity in ethnographic research design cannot be stressed enough.

When I initially designed the empirical research I had a fair idea of the issues involved but as my conceptual understanding developed, I made corresponding modifications to my research design. This worked both ways, as many issues were directly data led. The research design became increasingly informed and directed by extended negotiation of access. The next part describes my personal progress, dilemmas and experiences of becoming a complete participant observer in triathlon. I firstly consider access.

Verbal Access

I initially contacted the British Triathlon Association (BTA) in London registering an interest in joining a club as a novice. They sent me an information pack that not only listed all the clubs in England, but also contained everything one should consider when taking up the sport. This included a potted history of the sport, an explanation of the age grouping system that operates in triathlon, advice on training and diet and some extra references for additional use.

I made my initial verbal contact with my local triathlon club on the telephone to the 'primary gatekeeper' (Burgess, 1984, p.48) who was the club chairman. I explained that I was interested in taking up triathlon but that I was a complete beginner. I divulged the fact that I was a student in sport and exercise but inferred my reason for joining was that I needed to get fit. He appeared very friendly and assured me that the club welcomed any standard, and that there were already many novice members. I gained a brief run down of the training times and venues and we decided the gentlest introduction would be to attend the swimming sessions. The swimming training was at a local school pool 9.15 - 10. 15 p.m. on Monday evenings. He took my name and address and subsequently sent me the latest club newsletter.

From the first conversation with the BTA I realised that I had already collected my first data. I put the phone down knowing more about triathlon than I did before – such as distances, events, age groups. Similarly the chairperson had inadvertently told me things I wanted to know, but for which I had not even had to ask – for example times of training, the number of members in the club, and the various social events planned in

the near future. I now sensed that my tidy compartmentalised research design needed to be amended.

Many of the decisions concerning the research design were based on environmental factors, the importance of which I did not realise until I experienced them. The first was the nature of triathlon as a sport, as it involves three activities, running, cycling and swimming. The club chairman had also discussed how the nature of running and cycling made training environmentally fragmented, as the athletes split up into small groups of like ability. As he was talking I was covertly deciding that running and cycling were not sports that lent themselves to an observer sitting on the sidelines, as the researcher would not be in a position to see or to listen. I concluded that the only way to observe the training and racing was somehow to be alongside the athletes. The chairperson informed me that the only time the whole club met regularly was at the weekly swimming training session. I decided to conduct the initial informal investigation and the main bulk of the feminist ethnographic research in the swimming training sessions. The pool would, in theory, be an ideal place for the researcher simply to sit on the side and observe (Ruzek 1978, Rodriguez 1988, Theberge 1985). I decided to trial this possibility by attending a local swimming club session. In practice I found that a complete observer was far too distant to hear conversations or to gain any rich information from the swimmers themselves in the social setting. It convinced me that a non-participant observer role was not suitable for my inquiry and research sites. In order to immerse myself in the environment I needed to take the role of the complete participant (Wheaton and Tomlinson 1998, McCarthy Brown 1986, Ferraro 1983, Yount 1991, Reinharz 1992).

My role as complete participant was in line with feminist ethnographic research principles that established non-hierarchical power relations between the participants and me. In the research setting, my legitimate identity was as a novice triathlete (Clarke and Humberstone, 1997). Swimming was chosen as the main empirical activity as it was the only discipline where I could produce a legitimate performance (Clarke and Humberstone, 1997), that is, I could swim well enough to pass as a budding triathlete. My plan was to initially start in the beginners' lane but eventually move up to the middle or even the top group so that I would be able to experience each, and get to know different people. I also decided that I would attend the novice coaching sessions to learn how to ride a bike and although I was not a keen runner I should occasionally

run with the novices. My complete participant research status was further enhanced by my attendance at all social events and competitions.

The practice scenario

I decided to create a 'practice scenario' to the main ethnographic research. This was a four-week informal investigation period where I experimented with some of the suggested research techniques in the proposed triathlon setting. The following discussion illustrates how valuable this practice scenario was as a way to habituate the setting and to formalise problems before the collection of real data began.

For the first four weeks I gained entry and acceptance from the group by concealing my research intentions. Ethically I regarded this as justified, as my feminist ethnographic research had not officially started. It was an opportunity to practise my own observational and listening skills and to concentrate on background information about the club. At the time I was not specifically taking notes on the women without their knowledge. As I had intended however, (and as I describe later in this chapter) my researcher role became more overt as the research progressed.

Practical access

Gaining access was not just about permission from gatekeepers, but included dress, and being positioned by the participants. I invested in a new swimming costume and goggles for the occasion, plus an array of anti-chlorine shampoos and conditioners, which would indicate that I already had a little affiliation with the environment.

On Monday 16 March 1998 at 9.00 p.m. I gained practical entry to the club and attended my first structured swimming training session at a local comprehensive school. The smell of disinfectant filled the air as I negotiated the maze of corridors. The entrance was through the girls' communal changing rooms, where abandoned PE kit still hung on the pegs. The changing rooms were cold and dark, and the wet floor tiles looked as if they held the contents of the whole playing field despite the sign that said 'no outdoor shoes'. I had arrived early and was tentatively standing on the side of the pool clutching my kit bag when the triathletes started to arrive. I was pleasantly surprised at how many people said 'hello' and smiled as they went by. Martha and Hannah formally introduced themselves and asked if they could help. I explained that I had talked to the chairperson earlier in the week, and that I was thinking of taking up triathlon and wanted to join the club. I made it very clear that I was a real beginner at triathlon who had not swum for years. My plan was to introduce myself and then to weigh up what I had let myself in for by watching the first week, but somehow they

were very persuasive and I found myself getting changed. My new acquaintances assured me that there were all standards in the club and that everyone took the session at their own pace. I felt far more at ease just knowing two names, and headed for the pool to find the coach.

The 20-metre pool smelt strongly of chlorine and torrents of steam rose from it. Although there were still ten minutes until the start of the session, there were a few eager swimmers already ploughing up and down, and others began to emerge from both changing rooms. My first impressions were just how fast and fit they all looked. There was a friendly banter which seemed to concentrate around the races over the preceding weekend. The female coach arrived and I introduced myself. She was very encouraging and explained that there were three lanes depending on how fast one wished to train. I reinforced my total beginner status and joined the 'slow lane'. As I stood waist deep, in extremely cold water (deceived by the steam) trying to remember why I was doing this so late at night, and in conditions that were definitely more spartan than the health club I usually attended, I took my first conscious observation as a researcher. All three lanes were now full and at a quick count there seemed to be an even split of women in all three lanes. I counted eight other women and several appeared to be very proficient swimmers.

The session followed the same kind of format as my swimming club sessions when I was a junior, warm-up, main swim, stroke work, warm down. The only difference was the predominant concentration on one stroke, front crawl (which was always my least comfortable stroke). I had no choice but to take it easy, and found myself resting frequently. This in fact actually worked out to my benefit as I got to talk to all six people in my lane. I told everyone that asked that I was a student of sport and exercise.

Once I had seen the environment, I was correct to assume that the only way to conduct this particular research thoroughly was to become practically involved in the training sessions. I realise now, that had I only sat on poolside I would have collected little 'rich information' as it would be impossible to talk to anyone during the session. It would not even be easy to go to the changing rooms after the session, as stark naked triathletes being asked questions by a fully dressed non-participant would be both embarrassing and threatening. One hundred and fifteen lengths later the session drew to a close. Wearily I dragged myself to the changing rooms. The women chatted as they showered in the luke warm trickles of water. I realised that much of the literature that I had read had suggested that the researcher wrote all the important narrative down in a notebook

by frequent visits to the toilets. This technique was definitely not going to work in this setting. I was aware, however, that unconsciously, just from this first evening I already knew a lot of information about a variety of topics in the triathlon club. I left the school feeling totally exhausted and clutching my first invitation to a 'club social'. I had made my first step to becoming accepted as a triathlete.

In the following three weeks the format of the swimming sessions were very similar. I was genuinely in need of numerous rests and took the opportunity to stop between lengths as much as possible to observe the whole setting and to chat to the people who had also stopped. The conversation was very simplified, and focused on names, experience in triathlon, and trying to form a broader picture about the tri-club and identify the members. I concentrated on the following questions that would give me a solid basis for understanding my new environment:

- What is the nature of the club?
- How does it operate?
- Why have the women become involved/continue to be involved in triathlon?
- How do they train?
- Are there any indicators of a women's sub-culture?

Everyone was very friendly and I found myself feeling comfortable in this strange setting quite early on. I never felt daunted by the social situation and the fact that I like talking to strangers was definitely an advantage, however, my obvious *unfitness* for swimming and the terrifying thought of running and biking *was* very daunting indeed. I found this second phase an invaluable experience as it allowed me to experiment with what would, and would not work in the new environment. The practice scenario allowed me time to make mistakes when there was no pressure and to correct where I went wrong. I learnt more from the practice scenario than I anticipated. Despite the unsociable hours, the conditions of training, the aching muscles, and the increase in my shoulder width from the thousands of lengths of front crawl I had to swim, I began to really enjoy the challenge.

In retrospect, the first two phases were inestimable. The time allowed for theoretical feminist research methods to become positioned into an unfamiliar setting. After a settling-in period, I felt that I had developed enough basic knowledge and confidence to then continue with the real feminist ethnographic research. I was very surprised at just how much information I had unconsciously collected from the practice observation. It

demonstrated the need for a tight indexing system, with the ability to cross reference information as the emerging themes changed during the course of the research.

In a few weeks I had achieved more than I had expected. The triathlon group had accepted me, plus I was certain that the feminist ethnographic principles suited both me as the researcher and most importantly that it would allow me scope to fulfil the aims of my study. Having discussed some of the roles and relationships, the next area of clarification was to decide what I should write down. How should I write it down and when? The following sections describe (not in any order) the interplay of various methods that enabled my access to, and analysis of, the cultural practices in which gender power relations were expressed.

What is data?

The first question that I considered was what constitutes data? I looked at the empirical setting and wondered where to start, there seemed to be so much information.

Data collection in feminist ethnographic research involves a range of techniques, but particularly those which enable the actors' meanings and interpretations of the situations to be understood (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989, Hammersley, 1989). In this sense, ethnography as a method of research has issues in common with feminist research. In both, there is an attempt to build up theoretical concepts and frameworks, which are grounded in people's everyday experiences and lives. The differences in poststructural research are the *kinds* of questions which drive the collection of the data and the interpretation and conclusions drawn from the analysis. As previously discussed, a feminist poststructuralist researcher is not primarily interested in data as constructing a particular reality (Macdonald et al. (2002) p.143) but would focus upon the discursive resources. For example, in order to investigate the women's experiences and lives from their own perspectives I searched for data in their experiences of their relationships with various other social arenas; family and friends, cultural practices or influences of the media, and the notions of femininity or masculinity in the club. These reflected the discourses the interviewee draws on to constitute themselves as subjects and the consequences of this in terms of power and their social and cultural positioning and responses (Macdonald et al. 2002, p.143).

The world of triathlon was definitely a new environment for me as an athlete after fourteen years of elite basketball. My role as a *stranger* had the advantage of giving me a certain objectivity that would not be available to an established triathlete.

I wondered how I was ever going to organise all of what I would see and hear into 'meaningful data'. Spradley (1980 p.156) identified nine major dimensions of the social setting on which data may be collected. I decided to adapt this to the triathlon setting;

1. Space
2. Actor
3. Activity
4. Object
5. Act
6. Event
7. Time
8. Goal
9. Feeling

These seemed logical headings to experiment with initially, and I decided that I would organise my field notebook to include these nine sections each week. Burgess (1984) suggests that in addition to having various dimensions, it is also useful to build up a detailed portrait of the setting by having detailed questions. These could be in relation to a particular action or a period of time. I built up questions in waves i.e. general to specific details of areas such as the make up of the club, nature of the race scene and training techniques. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1989) suggest, the main purpose is to identify and develop what seem to be the most appropriate theoretical categories. Data from participant observation, social events and informal interviews were recorded by written field notes kept in a diary. I endeavoured to write up my notes immediately on returning home, so as not to lose the subtleties; for example, the accuracy of *what* was said, but also *how* it was said and in what *context*.

Research diary and field notes

A research diary was an important record during the data collection period in order to see how my ideas had changed over time and how the findings developed. It also provided evidence of how I entered the field and how I built the trust of individual participants. It was also a record of the reflexive, progressive nature of the research and emerging themes. I referred to it constantly as a background memory to the exact details of what I had seen and heard. I drew on it throughout the research process when deciding reflexively which path to follow, and constantly whilst analysing the findings. My research diary consisted of a detailed autobiographical account of the research

process, which discussed my feelings and the dilemmas that I confronted before and during the collection of the data and whilst analysing it (Humberstone 1997, p.200).

Field notes are the traditional means in ethnography for recording observational data. Field notes can be kept in a variety of ways including notebooks, audiotape and videotape. In the setting I chose to use a small notebook as it was now less intrusive and rejected the other methods as being impracticable. In accordance with feminist ethnography's commitment to discovery, field notes consist of 'relatively concrete descriptions of social processes in their contexts' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989, p.145). I found that even the briefest notes could be valuable aids to the construction of an account. A single word, a description of the dress of a person, or a particular word uttered by someone usually is enough to trigger off a string of images that affords substantial reconstruction of the observed scene. With this in mind, I decided to compile a field diary, which I regularly typed up from the shorthand in my notebook. I also wrote field notes after every interview, on the style of the interview (was it relaxed, where, when), and my perceptions of the interview. They added character and meaning to the audiotape.

As was seen in Chapter Two, language is not a mirror of reality rather it is the discourse of language that constitutes reality and various languages will construct specific aspects of reality in their own ways (Sparkes 1992, p.7). Poststructural theories of language allow us to understand how knowledge, truth and the subjects are produced in language and cultural practices as well as how they are reconfigured (Adams St. Pierre 2000 p.486) to construct gender power relations. With these issues in mind, I paid particular attention to detail when recording speech in my field notes. The actual words people use can be of considerable analytic importance, but only precise, direct quotes can be used verbatim. From the literature, I gained an understanding of how important it was to identify clearly quotes from summaries, and to indicate any gaps or uncertainties. In the field notes I adopted a notation technique from Hammersley (1989): (()) equals observer description, and (...) equals omission of parts of conversation in record. Another key point that the literature stressed, was that 'records of speech and action should be located in relation to who was present, where, at what time, and under what circumstances' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989, p.156). Through deconstruction I was able to make visible how the discourse of language operates in the triathlon club and analyse how it constructs very real, material, and sometimes damaging structures (Adams St. Pierre 2000, p.481). I was also able to

record how language was reformed by women and used to reinscribe their subjectivities in triathlon.

The advantage of a feminist ethnographic approach in my research was that the actions of the triathletes were studied in the social context in which they naturally occurred. The strategy of taking the subjects' perspective is often expressed in terms of seeing through the eyes of the people you are studying. Such an approach clearly involves an empathy with those being studied, but it also entails a capacity to pervade the frames of meaning with which they operate. As I was giving the women triathletes voice, the discourse of language provided the most important resource. I was aware that all accounts must be examined as social phenomena occurring in, and shaped by, particular contexts (Dabrowski 1983, Ginsburg 1989). Reinharz (1992) supports this, stressing the importance of understanding women in context when observing a setting. The circumstances surrounding a particular record may be crucial when it comes to the analysis of the data so I endeavoured to be as descriptive as possible. I continued my initial procedure of keeping a field notepad in the car, and as soon as the session was over I jotted the key words down, for word-processing in detail on my return home.

As I was unfamiliar with the environment, I found myself attending to mundane detail that the researcher who was also an experienced triathlete may have taken for granted. My fresh viewpoint gave the research a depth in detail. It promised a richness that may not have been forthcoming from a more familiar viewpoint. As Bryman (1988) suggests, the apparently superficial trivia and minutiae of everyday life are worthy of examination (p.63). It is impossible, however, to record all the data available in the course of fieldwork (Bryman 1988, p.145). I began to understand the wisdom of this statement as in a few weeks my field notebook was bulging with information.

A few weeks into my real participant observation (phase three) I felt comfortable enough with several of the women to broach the subject of interviews. Over the next few months, I interviewed all 13 women.

First and second interview phases

Introducing the participants

In order to set the stage for further discussion, I will now introduce the cast, and give a brief prologue of each participant in my ethnography (*italics denote their own words*). I felt I could not justify any silences, therefore, I chose to interview *all* the women that were members of the club at the start of my research on March 16th 1998:

*My name is **Harriet** I am 21 years old. I am an elite triathlete and I have competed in two World Championships in triathlon. ... white, middle class background. I live with my boyfriend (chairman of the club). I have just qualified as a teacher. ...able bodied ... I have been a member of the club since 1995.*

*I'm **Jackie**, I am 41 years old and I suppose I'd classify myself as an able bodied, Caucasian woman from a working class background. I am now happily married to my third husband after two previously violent marriages. I am from a working class background ...I only took up triathlon recently, so I am definitely a novice! I have been a member of the club only a few months.*

*My name is **Claire** I am 15years old and still at school. I am an elite junior triathlete. ... white ... middle class background ...I have been doing triathlon for 3 years.*

*I am **Trish** I would say that I am an intermediate veteran triathlete. I only took up triathlon a few years ago and I am now 38. I am married but have no children and I work full time as a chemist. ...white ... catholic ... able bodied.*

*Hi, I am **Sharon** I am 31 years old and a full time triathlete. I am an elite triathlete. ... I was part of the Great Britain team and participated in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney ... white, middle class and able bodied. I am married to Tom who is the club treasurer. I am hoping to start a family after the 2000 Olympics.*

*I'm **Tina**, I suppose you could say that I am white, middle class and married (no children). I am 34 years old and a full time nurse. I have belonged to the club for 3 years and to my horror I am now classified as a veteran triathlete!*

*My name is **Paula**, I am 34 years-old ... white middle class ... I work full time in a professional job. ... no children .. I live with my partner Sandy...I joined the club a year ago and am definitely a novice at triathlon.*

*I am **Coach**, I am 35 years old, ... a white, middle class, married woman with no children. I work full time in sales and coach triathlon part time. I am an intermediate triathlete myself.*

*Hello I am **Sandy** and I only started triathlon last year. I am 34 years old, and a white, middle class, lesbian woman. I work full time in teaching ... I am able bodied. ...We do not have children.*

*Hello there, I'm **Louise**! How would I describe myself I suppose as 28 years old. I'd say I am middle class, and very much a novice to all sport! I live with my boyfriend, no children but two cats. I have a full time professional job.*

***Betty**: I am a 30-year-old, white, Welsh, heterosexual woman. I'm able bodied and currently a novice at triathlon. I have a full time job in the marketing side of triathlon.*

*Hello, I am **Martha**. The best way I can sum myself up... a 35-year-old Irish lass from a working class, strict Catholic background. ...I am married to Rod and we never want children. ... I work full time in sales. ... I am a novice triathlete and this is my second year in the club.*

***Deirdre**: I am an intermediate triathlete. I am 30 years old and work full time in a professional job. I am white, middle class ... single with no children.*

These voices are heard throughout the thesis and gradually become explicit in its pages as each woman tells her story.

Informal woman-to woman interviews

Prior to interviewing the women I needed to build foundations of trust with the participants. Third wave feminisms emphasise that differences exist *in* women (for example in socio-economic status, sexual identity, marital status, and ethnic background) and trust is needed in order to collect these diverse and often sensitive views. Even though I was studying women from the standpoint of women and I had access to women's settings, the women did not automatically trust me (Reinharz 1992, p 65). Brackenridge's (2002) in depth account of how she slowly earned her participants' trust was very informative in identifying some key characteristics of a feminist approach. As the newest member of the club, it took several weeks for me to be included fully into the conversations or social plans. Trust was built in different time frames depending upon the individual woman. Martha for example was very warm and open from the start, whereas Paula and Sandy were very private people and it took much longer to become close to them. The segregation according to ability in the pool meant that I was able to build relationships quicker with Louise, Betty, Jackie and Martha and the other novices. After a few months, I accepted the coaches' invitation of promotion to the intermediate lane as I saw it as an opportunity to make closer bonds with Harriet, Tina, and Trish. The elite women, I made a point of talking to in the changing rooms, and striking up conversations with them at the socials. Little by little I found that I was being accepted into the club and getting closer to the women.

The feminist approach to interviewing, which is exemplified in the work of Oakley (1981), argues that the research process should include statements and discourses about one's own experiences with the phenomena under question (Bhopal 1995). The aim of understanding others is best achieved when 'the relationship of the interviewer and the interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship' (Oakley 1981, p.41). The use of semi-structured interviews which allows for free interaction between the researcher and the interviewee, has become the principal means by which feminists have sought to achieve the active involvement of their subjects in the construction of data about their lives (Graham 1984).

I decided to interview key women participants because it allowed the collection of data that was not directly observable. I needed to explore individual views on reality, probe their feelings, motivations, attitudes, accomplishments and their experiences. Brackenridge (1997) stresses that feminists must be willing to work in difficult areas of

research, be prepared to ask difficult questions and to voice unpopular messages. Understanding the difficult, sensitive and emotive areas of my research such as issues that surround eating habits, training and menstruation will make a contribution to the empowerment of women. This veiled, often sensitive access to women's perspectives can often only be uncovered through the skilled utilisation of interviewing techniques. The difference of feminist research is that the women's thoughts, opinions and experiences are in their own words. Learning from the women themselves, hearing their realities and knowledge is especially important to feminist research following multiple histories that either ignored women or let men speak for them.

Oakley (1981) argues that there is a possible contradiction in the term 'feminist interviewing' (Reinharz 1992, p.9) and cautions against non-hierarchical practices. I was conscious of the special character of the research situation when women talk to other women. Spender (1980) also shows how woman to woman talk is different from talk in mixed sexed groups. Although most of the women were able to trust me, confide in me and open up to me, I was aware that gender may not be enough to create the shared meanings which are essential to understand the experiences of women's lives. As Brah (1992) states '...race still acts as an apparently ineradicable marker of social difference' (p.126). This would be the case for any social classification such as sexuality, ability or religion. Mies (1991) however, argues that the concept 'partial identification' enables recognition of that which binds us to the 'other woman' as well as that which separates us from her. Binding us are all the experiences of women globally in terms of power relations; repression, sexism, and exploitation.

I wanted to make women the subject not the object of analysis, to let the women voice their lived experiences and to allow them to challenge any oppressive structures found in the culture of triathlon as well as to celebrate the joys it brought them. Methodological feminist research on participant observation advocates closeness between the researcher and the women as the only way to really understand them. It is suggested (Hochschild 1978, Reinharz 1992) that ethnography done by women is different from ethnography done by men. This could be because men and women have been socially constructed to interact in different ways. Feminist participant observation values openness to intimacy and strives for empathy. It is not based upon shallow friendships, but rather it involves the groundwork for friendship, shared struggle, and consciousness-raising and identity change (Reinharz 1992, p.68). In my own research, the setting of the triathlon club drove the methodological choice of individual close

personal relationships in order to understand the holistic picture of the triathletes as social beings. These relationships were themselves fluid over time and space. As will be evident in the findings, I found that as a feminist researcher I had an array of different relationships with different members of the club. I found that I could identify with feminist ethnographers such as Ruzek (1978) when she describes how the boundary between her life and her fieldwork site disappeared. The fieldwork setting is itself immersed in a larger social context, which is again embedded in culture, the boundaries between each has no form. Reinharz (1992) suggests that a feature of feminist ethnography is that it seeks deeper 'understanding of the links between the micro and macro-systems of gender politics' (p.55). For example, each woman was embedded in the wider gender-power relations of the triathlon club, which itself was influenced by the macro-gender politics of contemporary culture. I wanted the women to talk freely and reflexively with minimum guidance. Probing new avenues of enquiry, which were not predetermined but shaped by the experience of the women themselves was important. The strength of these interviews lay in the depth of personal reflection about the ways in which women interpreted and gave meaning to their experiences in triathlon.

I was also aware that I needed to create a non-threatening situation for the women. The feminist researcher should avoid displays that could be interpreted as power over the participant. It is best to take a more vulnerable position than the participants (Flintoff 1993) and exhibit a passive, receptive, open, understanding approach.

Each woman in my study instigated how, when and where the interview took place. First, and foremost I respected the rights, needs, values and desires of the interviewees. I was the sole person who interviewed the participants, knew their real names and addresses, and transcribed their accounts. The interviews were all conducted in person after the participants had understood the research objectives and the format of the interview. These were articulated and were also written out clearly in an informed consent statement (see Appendix 1) to read, date and sign. All participants could choose to remain anonymous. They were aware that they could refuse to answer any question and they were at liberty to withdraw from the interview at any stage. All participants were fully aware that the data would be kept confidential although the findings may be published in the future. These ethical considerations were used to instil trust and openness in the interview situation.

Some women chose to come to my house for a lunch or dinner before the interview, and others clearly felt more relaxed in their own homes or a public venue. In addition to the venue I was also conscious of the other material items that might create a threatening atmosphere. All the participants gave their written permission for me to record the interviews, but I reconfirmed this and showed them the tape recorder before we started. I bought the smallest and fully automatic Dictaphone and discretely positioned it to minimise its effect. I observed the body language of the women and decided that if the situation arose, I would concede taped information and rely on notes. I paid particular attention to the way I dressed and wore pale toned down colours with no designer labels. Power dressing could easily have given the researcher a perceived authority over the participant. I maintained vulnerability under my novice triathlete status, which ensured the participants felt that they were the experts.

As I wanted a cross section of experiences, I decided to interview *all* the women members (13) in the club at the start of my research in 1998. I chose not interview an eight-year-old girl who had only just started triathlon because she was too young to have any relevant experience in the club setting. Each woman was interviewed a second time after a gap of a year, as a follow up to explore the emergent themes. Every interview had a rough time scale of one hour but this was flexible depending on the situation. I transcribed the interviews and then verbatim transcripts were sent to the participants so that they could verify that they were correct. Written interpretations and reports were later made available to the individuals.

In my study, the women interviewed were from a diverse background of experience—some elite athletes, some beginners and some who just trained extensively. The interviews produced very rich description and also revealed some very exciting themes. I tried to ensure that the women's voices were continuing to be heard in the second interviews by keeping them as informal as possible and letting the women talk around the emergent themes without too much guidance. Also, as most triathletes interviewed took pride in keeping a training diary, another method that I adopted was to ask key members to keep a personal diary.

The womens' personal diaries

A personal diary is a valuable method of feminist research as it gives voice to women by allowing them to record their own thoughts, activities, motivations or frustrations. The use of diaries was appropriate for this study as they make it possible for women's individual experiences to be articulated and enables the researcher to be more sensitive

to those experiences. The personal diary technique (Curtner-Smith 2002) allows the researcher to probe deeper into the individual woman's social world. The strength of a diary is that it provides a rich picture of activities and interrelationships. The weakness of using diaries to investigate the social use of time is that their completion interferes with the use of time itself (a crucial issue for women). It also requires that the participants both want to and are committed to keeping a diary.

I selected eight women who specifically revealed rich information linked to emerging themes (for example fixations with food, lack of periods, extreme training regimes, and injuries) during their interviews. Afterwards I asked the participants to keep a detailed diary as an extension to their training diaries over pre-season training and during the whole triathlon season. As one of the main aims of my study was to give the women the opportunity to voice their own experiences, at first I asked them to write as freely as possible. As the research changed and emerging themes started to become more evident I gave the diaries directed foci to make their voices more powerful. The headings were training, competing, motivations, frustrations, inter-relationships, eating and drinking, habits, clothes, menstruation, injuries and illness. In all of the areas the participants were asked to express themselves in terms of feelings, attitudes, moods, body image, highs and lows, confidence and emotions. To make this less time consuming for them I devised a grid system that they could use if they wished.

Some participants gave rich, detailed accounts, whereas others' accounts were sometimes a little 'thin'. In line with feminist poststructuralism it was important to consider each participant individually. Those who were producing 'thin' data, I decided to interview every month. I asked all of the participants to send me the diaries each week so that my analysis could be ongoing. Most of the women seemed inhibited at first and wrote briefly. I found, however, that the richness of the diaries increased as the level of researcher/participant trust grew. As the relationships changed from unfamiliarity to friendship so the description of the women's lives expanded in colour and depth. The downside to personal diaries for use as data, was that the more intimate the diaries became, the more insistent some of the women were that the actual diaries were restricted to me only. While the women agreed that the material could be extracted and used, some were not comfortable for intimacies to be available to anyone else. This means that I am not able to submit the diaries as a whole with my thesis, although the women gave me permission to use the material for my analysis. As the researcher I had to be clear what the boundaries were with each individual woman. The relationship

between researcher and participant was one built on trust and most gave me permission to quote anything they said about their training or about the club. If there was a sensitive entry of the diary that I would like to use, I would always check with the woman first.

One aspect that I found fascinating was the change in relationship between the participant and researcher *after* the interview, and especially as the diaries progressed. Genuine warmth was generated as if the participants acknowledged a confidante in that I knew some secrets about them. I now viewed them differently too, more as friends than just acquaintances. The diaries were an effective means of collecting data and giving individual women voice(s) and ownership of the research. In all the data collection methods, ethical considerations were paramount and those are the focus of the next section.

Ethical considerations

As a feminist researcher, the social environment and the variety of methods employed raised numerous ethical and political issues. Ethical issues are of utmost importance in feminist social research with the rights of the participant paramount. As I was often discussing sensitive issues, the role of the researcher as a counsellor is a very serious issue to consider. In ethically sensitive areas such as aspects of the women's social lives, where participants may reveal some disturbing facts in confidence, a researcher may experience some participant dependency. In my research it was sometimes necessary to make it absolutely clear that I was a social researcher *not* a psychiatrist and a vital follow up stage was the suggestion of referral to specialists. A researcher cannot jeopardise the participant's trust by giving unqualified opinions that may make their lives worse.

The problems indicated above can never be completely eliminated from feminist research. The key focus of reflexivity throughout my research played an important role in making me sensitive to these issues. The next section addresses the main ethical difficulties that I had to confront.

To deceive or not to deceive - complete observer or complete participant?

Methodological literature on participant observation (Reinharz 1992) suggests I could have positioned myself anywhere on the continuum of complete observer (for example Ruzek 1978, Rodriguez 1988, Theberge 1985) to complete participant (for example Wheaton and Tomlinson 1998, McCarthy Brown 1986, Ferraro 1983, Yount 1991). As a feminist ethnographic observer, I had to make decisions about how much I was going

to *participate in* the activities of the setting as well as the extent to which the participants *knew* that they were being observed. I argue the ethical, epistemological and contextual importance of total immersion into the setting in order to understand the culture being studied. The nature of triathlon forces the social researcher into the role of complete participant. As an outsider, in order to become a complete participant, I first had to learn how to recognise and produce legitimate performances in each of the triathlon settings so I would be recognised as a legitimate participant by the other triathletes.

The issue of deception was first raised at the onset of the research in the negotiation over access to the triathlon club. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1989) argue where the research is secret to all those under study and to the gatekeepers (in this case the club secretary), 'the problem of access may be solved at a stroke, providing the deception is not discovered' (p.70). I was hesitant that the label researcher might conjure up some power assumptions, whereas joining the club as a new member put me in a similar position to the other novice women triathletes. Entering the setting incognito meant that I was initially judged and then accepted on my qualities as a sportswoman.

Deciding when and how to divulge my role as a researcher and to let participants *know* that I was observing them was a sensitive ethical issue. I did not want to destroy the rapport or any trust that I had built up, nor did I want the others to think that research was my sole aim of being a member of the club. It was important epistemologically for me to adopt a feminist stance that was open, receptive, empathetic and one that interconnected thought to experience by living relationships as novice triathlete. In the end however, the transition from covert to overt feminist researcher was not a problem, as the idea of the research was seen to emerge *from* the participants themselves. This mirrored Hammersley and Atkinson's (1989) notion that my peers were more concerned with what kind of person I was than with the research itself. This is also in line with McCarthy Brown (1986) who argues that fieldwork that takes you out of the context of academic compartmentalisation and allows you to be fused to your work is a principle that underpins feminist ethnographic methodology. For many feminist ethnographers there is no distinction between the researcher and the researched. Instead they have studied their own experience (Stanley 1982) a view which is criticised as limiting (Reinharz 1992).

I identified with McCarthy Brown's (1986) discussion of the outsider to insider transition. My own involvement during the research changed profoundly during the course of my research, so by the end I considered myself (and was considered) as a key player in the club. Currently I am still a member. The club remains part of my life.

Several feminist ethnographic accounts recall various dilemmas researchers' faced in non-equitable settings and in certain power relations (Wajcman 1983). Baker (1987) suggests that allegiance with particular sub-groups impacts on researchers' critical perspective. I can identify with this as within a year of becoming a member I was nominated to be the women's representative on the triathlon club committee. Although I will welcome the position in the future as an avenue of feminist praxis, I did not yet want to be seen by other women as holding a position of power. As Reinharz (1992) states '...feminist ethnographers typically make double contributions ... They contribute to our understanding of feminist ethnography as a method of social research, and they contribute to the understanding of the subject matter they choose to study' (p.71).

Anonymity

Anonymity was considered to be necessary for both the organisation and the individuals. One of the strengths of good ethnographic research is the rich detailed description that really brings the setting and the players in the environment to life. The problem with this is that the depth of description increases the likelihood of recognition of participants and locations. In social research the risk to human subjects could be psychological, legal or physical. I was very aware of my responsibilities to protect my participants. I used pseudonyms for all participants and renamed the club Avon, but I did not alter any of the features in the club as I considered that this would constitute a distortion of the data (Penney 1998). As one of the aims of this study is to gain knowledge *for* women, the anonymity may encourage more athletes to relate the description of the women's lives to their own experiences. Other triathletes may see some behaviour applicable in their own lifestyles in time to modify their own ritualistic patterns.

Confidentiality

When a research project deals with sensitive or controversial topics, confidentiality is vital. Research confidantes do not have privileged status (as do doctor and patient, client and solicitor) and, therefore, are open to the possibility of being subpoenaed. Confidentiality was protected by not using names of participants or locations in any

publications that result from the research project, unless all involved agree in advance. To avoid a violation of confidentiality a good rule to follow is to minimise the number of individuals that know the identity of research participants. I was sensitive to the fact that I was dealing with the personal and confidential inner feelings of women and so it was my duty to protect their interests. To ensure privacy, pseudonyms were coded, the correct names were never spoken or written on the interview tapes, and the tapes were kept in a secure place.

To protect the researcher and the participants, an informed consent form (Appendix 1) was signed and dated before the interview. It states that the participant agrees to undertake the interview and that they realise that the findings could be published in academic journals. It also states that any information they gave me was confidential and that no names or places would be mentioned.

Semi-covert listening and taking notes

During the fifth session I officially considered myself as an ethnographic researcher and my data collection formally started. My investigation was no longer limited to the general background information of the club but now focused on the women 'characters in the play' and their relationships with each other and with others. There were two reasons why my role as researcher changed. The stronger reason was that ethically I could not conduct research on women without their knowledge. The second was that the strategy of 'complete participant' normally proves extremely limiting (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989, p.94). The technique I employed to make this transition was that I gradually introduced the idea of research after I had gained acceptance into the group. After the fourth session the opportunity presented itself in the changing rooms when Martha asked me about the course I was studying. I took the chance to casually drop it into the conversation that I had to think of a topic for a piece of coursework. Trish came back with '*you should do it on triathlon!*' I had to appear as if I had not even contemplated the prospect, and responded (not too enthusiastically) that her suggestion was 'quite a good idea actually'.

During the fifth week, my role as researcher began to change to adopt a participant-as-observer role. I did not want to lose my identity as a novice triathlete, nor did I want to lose the acceptance that I had already gained from the group. I concealed the fact that research may be an overriding interest and inferred that my commitment to training was the main priority. I openly talked about university, however, and my aspirations to gain a PhD and when questioned told them that the research was to investigate women's

triathlon. I answered all questions honestly. As time progressed I was aware that several participants were regularly asking me how my 'project' was going. I found that I was genuinely forming an affiliation with some of the athletes. I needed them to trust me, but on the other hand I was interested in them as individuals and wanted to respect their feelings. The issue of deception then moved from a stranger/participant level to one of integrity between friends.

An overt feminist researcher - Guided conversations

After a couple of months, I mentioned to a few of my new friends that I had decided to focus on triathlon for a piece of coursework. I reinforced this in more detail at the next social event and it was met with enthusiasm and a string of volunteers for future interviews. This changed my role as the researcher from 'covert' to 'overt' but I retained my dual identity as a novice triathlete by remaining fully committed to the training sessions. In social encounters I began to direct conversations much more, both under the identities of both keen novice and researcher. By taking a vulnerable position, I feel that I gained far more rich information because the women participants felt in authority and so appeared eager to talk about themselves with minimal leading. By the end of the fifteenth week, I felt they were used to talking to me and I had no problem guiding conversations to cover areas of interest. I genuinely felt part of the club. On several occasions, however, I did become concerned rather than flattered, when the other women triathletes began to include me in conversations to decide which races would be good to compete in. I pursued my bad knee excuse for not being able to run. As early as my sixth week, I was no longer the new girl as several other women had joined. I found it ironic that they seemed to think that I would know all the answers to their multitude of questions. By the end of a few months I was amazed how much I could in fact tell them. I had identified the key participants in the club and already many people had volunteered to be interviewed.

Another ethical consideration highlighted by many feminist researchers (Hall 1996, Slack and Shaw 2002, Sherlock 1997) is the importance of feedback from the research. This involves giving each woman the opportunity to review the transcripts for errors or misinterpretation.

Feminist analysis of ethnographic data

Reinharz (1992) suggests that a feminist perspective on data analysis involve many components. They include understanding women in their social context, and using women's language and behaviour to understand the relationship between self and

context (p.71). They also include letting each participant have a voice and using feminist theory to analyse data as well as reflexivity in the research design. I wanted to use my data to evaluate feminist theory. This involved collecting data from the triathlon settings, making theoretical sense of what I saw, what participants and other players said, categorising the data into emerging themes, analysing the findings drawing upon feminist theory and then looking for *new* feminist theory. 'When doing data analysis, feminist ethnographers point out the important difference of *drawing* on feminist theory rather than *imposing* feminist theory' (Reinharz 1992, p.72). In line with Stall (1983) it was imperative that I did not measure everyone against my own standards, so that I could see more easily the experiences that other women were having in their own lives. In order for me to hear another voice I first had to be willing to hear what someone else is saying, even when it violated my expectations or threatened my interests (Reinharz 1992). As Reinharz (1992) states 'The challenge for feminism is to both develop feminist theory and find ways of understanding the way it is rejected by some of the very people whose lives it tries to explain' (1992, p.72). Some of the dilemmas I faced in my analysis of the data were how much should I use my own voice? How much control should the participants have over the product? (Reinharz 1992).

In total there were over 500 pages of transcripts, field notes, diaries and a research log to be analysed. I was not prepared for the volume of information, and at first I found it overwhelming. Creswell (1994) indicates some sophisticated computer programmes such as NVivo, which are available for data retrieval to aid social research. He stresses their particular value in ethnographic research where there are extensive field notes, interviews and diaries. Although I did go on a course, access and instruction in NVivo came too late on into the research. I felt that I did not have time to develop sufficient skills to enter all the data I had collected already.

Coding is the organisation of data into manageable categories (Jones 1985a). Instead of using computer software, I coded my information by using various colour highlighter pens on dialogue and observations that fell under emerging themes. The same piece of information could be striped in several colours indicating that the themes overlapped and related to each other. I realised how deeply immersed I was in the setting as I could actually remember what each participant had said. I made a decision to rely on my personal knowledge of participants' thoughts and social worlds. Consequently data analysis was hard but I needed to make sense of and organise the data into a detailed

format that would allow me to examine the expression of discourses that influence the construction of gender power relations in this triathlon club.

In the first level of analysis I found that by reading the field notes each week, I could see some emerging issues (obsessions with training times, body image, and clothing). In order to understand the dominant discourses of power it was important to identify whether data was either formal expressions of discourse (those that were sanctioned by the triathlon organisation) or discourses expressed informally through individual language or action. As Slack and Shaw (2002) argue, a formal expression of a discourse in an organisation may suggest that the organisation is equitable because it has an equity policy. The informal view from the insiders of the organisation however, may reveal that such a policy is worthless in their experience.

Developing and pursuing emerging themes should be an integral part of feminist ethnographic research and is not a distinct part of the research process. Analysis and open coding through reading, contemplation and re-reading of my research and participant observation diaries were key features of analysis. Initially I asked very simple questions such as what were the influencing factors for the woman's participation in triathlon? What underpinned the enjoyment and commitment to triathlon? How did triathlon affect individual women's lives? Social lives? Diet? How did the individual woman athlete view her body? My questions started to be refined and because of the progressive nature of the research process, subsequent questions focused more specifically on data that came from the interviews. At first, I just categorised the data loosely but these initial categories were not stable. There were many categories with not enough data in each for substantial analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). I then realised that themes were emerging and that the categories could all be coded under more definite theoretical themes, or as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest 'vaguely understood categories (were) differentiated into several more clearly defined ones' (p.213). I then re-read the data specifically looking for evidence that could then further substantiate the established themes.

As soon as all the data was coded into themes and theoretical headings I was able to analyse the discourses that were expressed in and through triathlon via the organisational practices of the club. The analysis of discourses; language; power, resistance, and freedom; knowledge and truth and the subject contributed to the understanding of how gender power relations were created in the triathlon organisation. By identifying the dominant discourses in the club, I was able to understand how

women were both positioned, and positioned *themselves*, in the triathlon club. The next section will describe the development of the writing of the thesis. As has been seen above the poststructuralist feminist paradigm adopted in this research raised important methodological issues and posed challenges that extended to the writing of this thesis.

The writing: Gender, power and representation

I am waiting for them to stop talking about the ‘other’, to stop even describing how important it is to be able to speak about difference. It is not just important that we speak about, but how and why we speak. Often this speech about the ‘other’ is also a mask, an oppressive talk hiding gaps, absences, that space where our words would be if we were speaking, if there were a silence, if we were there. This ‘we’ is that ‘us’ in the margins, the ‘we’ who inhabit that marginal space that is not the site of domination but a place of resistance. Enter that space. Often this speech about the ‘other’ annihilates, erases: ‘no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the centre of my talk. Stop (hooks 1990, p.151).

This section considers hooks’s (1990) comments and addresses the complex question of power in the writing. As a feminist researcher, I am very aware how power can be misused. The process of writing made me realise the responsibilities one has towards the participants in the research process. Integral to poststructural feminist epistemology and methodology is reflexivity. Maynard and Purvis (1994) suggest this is the continual assessment of the contribution of one’s knowledge to others, as well as the questions we have asked; the way we locate ourselves in our questions and the purpose of our work. Warren and Hackney (2000) suggest that feminists writing ethnography must be ‘self-reflexively aware of, attuned to, and familiar with the latest iterations of the representational industry’ (p.64). Woodward’s (2000) feminist emancipatory research involved over a thousand written accounts of child abuse survivors. She recounts that her central writing dilemmas were concerns of

representation and acknowledging the responsibility to those I speak for, as well as the responsibility for where I speak from – questioning whether I should have the privilege to know other people’s stories ... whether I have authority to speak for my respondents and, most importantly, whether I can accurately represent and tell respondents’ stories (p.44).

There are three layers in my research which all involve issues of representation. The first is how I represent myself in the work. As the researcher I acknowledge that I have the power over the total structure, what is included, what is left out, and ultimately what words are actually used. Selection of data is also based upon my own interpretation. I have written myself 'in' to the analysis, although there was a balance sought between my autobiography and the focus of the research. The second issue is how I represent the women's stories of triathlon and their lives. I needed to tell the women's stories and my analysis chapters contain a lot of description and direct voices of the women themselves, however, the description is always analysed. The process of writing is itself analytical through constant 'reduction' and 'interpretation' (Marshall and Rossman 1989, p.114). 'To write anything is to fillet, for what we do as academics is to foreground, and umbrate, underscore, and ignore, select out and put in, embolden, and fade out, excise and incise on each and every page' (Dale, 1997, p.96). There can be no such thing as a neutral report since 'the conventions of text and the language forms used by researchers of all paradigmatic stances are actively involved in the *construction* of realities' (Sparkes 1992, p.7). Sparkes (1992) concludes by suggesting that researchers should be 'encouraged to develop a reflexive self-awareness of the rhetorical and stylistic conventions we use so that they can be brought into our explicit and methodological understanding' (p.7).

The last issue of representation is each woman's sense of self and subjectivities in her own experiences of triathlon. The process of telling one's story, of it being heard and it being deemed theoretically important can lead to greater emancipation and empowerment for women in sport. Richardson (1990) argues how the 'collective story' gives voice to those that are usually marginalised or silenced in the cultural narrative. Richardson (1990) argues:

At the individual level, people make sense of their lives through the stories that are available to them, and attempt to fit their lives into available stories. People live by stories. If the available narrative is limiting, destructive, or at odds with the actual life, people's lives end up being limited and textually disenfranchised. Collective stories that deviate from standard cultural plots provide new narratives; hearing them legitimates replotting one's own life. New narratives offer patterns for new lives (p. 26).

The overall analysis of the research is organised as follows. The analyses of triathlon culture and the practices that construct gender-power relations mirror a triathlon event as it has three foci. The first part of Chapter Five deconstructs the formally expressed

discourses of the British Triathlon Association (BTA). The second half analyses the formally expressed discourses of the triathlon club.

Chapter Five: The construction of triathlon histories

The analysis of histories is a key to understanding power, of which gender-power relations is a part. Triathlon has its own internal histories that are encased in gendered assumptions and meaning is derived from the discourse in which triathlon takes place (Weedon 1997). It is necessary to deconstruct the discourses in the institutions of triathlon (briefly the British Triathlon Association (BTA) and then specifically the club) to analyse how language; discourse; knowledges and truths; and power, resistance and freedoms; and the subject have been culturally constructed. Whitson (1990) suggests that individuals tend to privilege certain histories and events, so, some historical voices may have been ignored in the attempt to analyse the history of sport as a whole. My research does not affirm the status quo, instead it questions whose knowledge, truth and reason have constructed triathlon *history/histories*. I critically analyse the development of triathlon in conjunction with histo-feminist theory. I also analyse the discursive practices that surround triathlon in order to show the assumptions about gender. Women are often categorised in relation to men in terms of real, ideal or valued criteria. Understanding triathletes' experiences through their *own* voices corrects a major bias of non-feminist participant observation (Reinharz 1992, p.52). Learning from the voices of women triathletes, hearing sportswomen's realities and *their* knowledges and truths is especially important to feminist research following the gender blind version of sports history that has either ignored women or let men speak for them. This research challenges the construction of a sports organisation by asking *Whose* history? *Whose* tradition? *Whose* nature? *Whose* truth?

The first part of this chapter introduces the reader to the activity of triathlon and analyses how the sport was formed. The next section considers some of the cultural practices in the BTA because as (Markula 2003) suggests it is as important to study the management of power, as it is to analyse individuals' reactions to it. The National Governing Bodies for Sport act as gatekeepers of power and have direct influence on how specific sports are constructed and marketed. My first level of analysis involves coding the data into formally expressed discourses (those sanctioned by the BTA/the club, for example, various organisational documents) and informally expressed discourses (unsanctioned) that will aid the organisation of deeper analysis (Shaw and Slack 2002, Kerfoot and Whitehead 1998). My second level of analysis then codes the formal and informal data further into theoretically led headings of: language; discourse; knowledges and truths; power, resistance and freedoms; and the subject.

The analysis of the formally expressed discourses in triathlon is indicative of how gender-power relations; knowledges and truths are constructed for the triathlete. As a prospective member I was sent a media package entitled *Do Tri* and two BTA Handbooks. The sport of triathlon was persuasively marketed to me as 'a modern lifestyle sport that welcomes newcomers to an exciting world of multi-disciplined activity' (BTA 1997b, p.2). The BTA aligns triathlon with a discourse of health. This is reinforced by a quote from Paul Green (a well known member of the Great Britain Team in 1997):

Whether it be on a professional level or just for fun, I believe it certainly leads to making an individual's lifestyle so much more healthy by doing something that they enjoy'

Triathlon involves a continuous race over various distances in the three disciplines of swimming, cycling and running. Competitors race against the clock, which starts as they enter the swim, and stops as they cross the finish line after the run. The BTA stated that in 1997 there were 15,000 BTA members competing in over 300 organised triathlons all over Great Britain (BTA 1997b, p.2). Triathlon's popularity was reflected in the fact that although it is less than 30 years old, in the year 2000 it became an Olympic event. The age group system divides competitors into categories based on 5 year age bands (for example, 20-24; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39 and so on up to 70 years plus) and although everyone races together, the results show placing against competitors of the same gender and in the same age band.

The BTA's account of the 'History of Triathlon' is sparse:

Triathlon dates back to around 1974 to the beaches in Southern California when a group of friends began to train together. The group contained mostly runners, a few swimmers and a few cyclists. It wasn't long before the group was organising informal runs and races followed by events containing swimming and running, and a natural progression led them to include cycling (BTA 1997b, p.2).

It could be argued that triathlon emerged as non-profit making, low key, and unisex events and that early amateur triathlon carried with it discourses such as participation over success, and spontaneity and pleasure in one's own physicality and in the environment.

Triathlon was formed at a significant time in feminist theorising. In the 1970s, liberal feminists saw inequality as gender based and argued that the root of women's oppression was unequal access to certain resources. Legislation such as Title X1 (1972) in the USA (that addressed equal opportunities for women in collegiate sport) and the

1970 Equal Pay Act in England (that insured women equal rights in the work place) were both of momentous significance for women's equal rights at this time. Triathlon emerged at the height of liberal feminism that advocated that women should have the same access to the same sports as men. Liberal feminists blamed their lack of freedom on prejudice, irrationality and discrimination and encouraged all individuals to attempt to succeed regardless of sex, age, religion, sexuality or ethnicity. It could be argued that by 1974 feminism had gained enough support in popular culture to influence new social arenas such as triathlon. This new activity overtly promoted equal opportunities from its onset by enabling sportsmen and sportswomen to be on the same start line and competing over the same distance. Liberal feminists celebrated the fact that women were doing the same as the men. Missing from the liberal feminists' argument, however, is any analysis of gender-power relations.

As I discussed in Chapter Three, 'To be masculine or feminine requires the performance of masculinity and femininity' (Keyworth 2001, p.122) and, in early triathlon, gender relations were constructed in such a way that emphasised empathy and support (histo-culturally constructed as feminine). The discourses that already surrounded the world of professional sport in the 1970s, however, were very different, emphasising aggression and competitiveness (histo-culturally constructed as masculine).

In 1978 the first *Ironman* was held in Hawaii. It was a defining moment in triathlon as it was responsible for constructing a dramatic change in the discourses surrounding the sport. The increased Ironman distances: a 3.8km swim, a 180km-bike race followed by a full marathon were out of the reach of many and physically challenged even the most dedicated athlete.

Deconstruction of (the few) historical accounts in the BTA literature suggests that the spontaneous enjoyment described in the early triathlons was replaced by a set of masculinised discourses that mirrored the work ethic, and training for triathlon became a serious task that required commitment, hard work and a disciplined approach. The Ironman contest suggests that the discourses of performance were gradually being normalised into triathlon culture. The pure enjoyment of triathlon was replaced by intertwining the values of enjoyment with skill, specialisation and excellence. The 1978 Ironman secured commercial support from television and advertising rights that had not previously featured in triathlon (BTA, 1997b). Large sums were suddenly available in prize money. Marxist feminists argue that the interlinked systems of capitalism and patriarchy are both systems of power and that patriarchy and the sexual division of

labour serve the interests of a capitalist economy. This was reflected in these early years where inequity was expressed in triathlon through patriarchy and unequal prize money. This was eventually changed due to the recognition that the practice was inequitable. The catalyst for equitable changes in triathlon came with the formation of a Governing Body.

Discourse; knowledges and truths in the BTA

The BTA was formed in 1981 at a time when the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) was forcing organisations to address equity. From then on data suggests that an equitable discourse of triathlon in the United Kingdom (UK) was formally constructed. Shaw and Slack's (2002) ethnographic study of the cultural practices of three National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB) does not name the organisations but Shaw and Slack (2002) state that NGB B was formed 24 years ago. It was helpful to draw upon findings of a young organisation created about the same time as it helped me to see similarities to and differences from the BTA.

In 1974 contemporary Western society, post the establishment of a women's movement and anti-sexist legislation, saw knowledges and truths; and gender-power relations constantly being challenged. The BTA had equal recognition of women and men in terms of sporting and management presence from the start. This ensured that women were an integral part of the creation of knowledges and truths in a sports organisation. The equitable construction of the BTA was in contrast to the notion that *all* sport organisations are men dominated (Martin 1996). Shaw and Slack (2002) found that the 'discourses expressed in NGB B's brief history reflected much of the change in attitude towards women's roles and a growing appreciation of femininities in society and their involvement in sports participation and management' (p.97). There may be many reasons for this but as Shaw and Slack (2002) contend 'it initially appeared that the more positive societal discourses, ... were due to the lack of commitment to the Victorian practices that were evident' (p.97) in other organisations. Cricket, hockey and football are examples that are steeped in residual discourses (historical, cultural and symbolic) that have constructed the gender-power relations that remain firmly entrenched in the sports today. The relative youth of an organisation may account for 'its 'baggageless' nature in terms of its appreciation of women and men' (Shaw and Slack 2002, p.102). As I will go on to illustrate below, the cultural practices evident in the data I collected from the BTA would suggest that the formal and informal creation of organisational histories are very similar to Shaw and Slack's (2002) NGB B.

Power, resistance and freedoms in the BTA

The starting point to theorising resistance in triathlon was through a feminist appropriation of Foucault's (1978/1976) relational understanding of power (Guthrie and Castlenuovo 2001, p.7). Power itself will produce alternate reactions and resistances. Identities are no longer fixed and, therefore, power relations change in different circumstances. Markula (2003) advocates two types of resistance in women's lives: 'reverse resistance' (Foucault 1978/1976) that involves practices that support powerful discourses and 'resistance as freedom' (Foucault 1978/1976) that involves practices of self-development that transcend the discourse. In feminist sports research the division appears to parallel the work of Cole (1993) and Markula (1995) who analyse sport as a technology of power and later Markula's (2003) notion of sport as women's technology of the self.

The formal triathlon documentation implies that the organisational infrastructure of the BTA was established to cater for women. An example of the formal expression of women's resistance as freedom in the BTA was its *Women's Committee* that was created to 'redress the imbalance of participation in triathlon' (BTA 1998a, p.2). The early BTA policy initiatives which identified 'women' as a target group however, homogenised *all* women and paid little attention to the differences *between* women. They also did not take into account the power relations *in* groups of women. According to the BTA, the *Women's Committee's* 'primary aim will continue to be to introduce more women into the sport and ensure that their needs are cared for' (BTA 1998a, p.2). The BTA also identified that the *Women's Committee* was vitally important to ensure that '... issues of particular interests or concern to women are raised' (Hughes 1997).

The BTA proudly explained to me by phone how their *Women's Committee* symbolised a commitment to equity in the sport, however, difference between women was never mentioned. My findings of equitable policies in the BTA equates with Shaw and Slack's (2002) findings for NGB B. The formal acknowledgement of women through the *Women's Committee* was a commitment to their value in the organisation and so cemented their place at the heart of the organisation. If knowledge is equated with power and they are inherently linked (Foucault 1979), then women in the BTA have access to the historical creation of power in the organisation. This meant that in contrast with organisations established in Victorian times, gender relations and organisational practices of the BTA were materialised with an appreciation of *both* masculinities and femininities (Shaw and Slack 2002).

The BTA formally presented its history through its members' magazine. First impressions saw women marginalised from the bulk of written text and relegated to the small regular section entitled *Women's News*. This was a page devoted to women's competition results, training tips, and other news considered to be of relevance to, and about women. Some may celebrate this, however, as a resistance for freedom (Foucault 1997/1984) as the voices of women themselves were being heard. It could be read as resistance against the dominant discourses of sport and rather than serving to marginalise women, it may be seen as an opportunity to create alternative knowledges and truths about women triathletes' performances, issues and ways of training. In addition, another section entitled the *Women's Forum* was devoted to equity by publishing marginalised voices. Women were given voice through the *Women's Forum* and they used it to articulate their resistance to a masculinised version of history via the BTA members' magazine. As in Shaw and Slack's (2002) research, many women said how they would welcome the day when articles and photos of women gained automatic inclusion. In the early years of the BTA there were some great performances by women triathletes which surpassed the men on the international arena. Sharon, a participant in this study competed in the 2000 Olympics and both the men's and women's teams were hopeful for medals. It was in the organisation's interest not to marginalise women but to create a vision of knowledge that included and valued their performances.

I asked a National coach (a woman, pseudonymed in this study *Coach*, as she was also the club coach) about her perceptions of triathlon as being an equitable sport:

C: Well, when triathlon very first started it was a group of men, who started it but once triathlon took off especially in this country, um, it kind of took off equally and for many years our women were far superior than our men at world level, now obviously we do have a number of men achieving at very high level and we still have some women who are achieving at that level too. But it doesn't matter male or females the distances are still the same, everybody can compete on the same level.

A: So would you name it as one of the 'new' sports, an equal opportunity sport?

C: Yes, most certainly, although there are still limited numbers of women that do compete, and even fewer that coach or tutor.

In the BTA, equitable knowledges could be seen as establishing truths about gender-power relations. General media coverage, however, was slow to adapt and as Sandy, a fellow club member observed, the printed press were favouring men's histories:

I do notice in the press that it is John Smith that is getting all the publicity about his ability to get gold. You know Sharon and Jo who

are incredibly good, and have been doing very very well for an equally long time and have worked very very hard to get there don't really get a mention, but I guess that is just the nature of sport in general

Another junior member Claire wrote to the BTA to complain about the absence of girls in the triathlon press. She said: *I wrote a letter to the Tri-News because they didn't mention any of the girls in one of the races!*

As a new member of the BTA in 1997 I received a copy of my first *Handbook for Women* which proved to be very rich data and an example of equitable practice in the organisation. In the BTA's *Handbook for Women* (1998a), the Chief Executive Officer wrote: 'In all aspects of the sport equality is of major importance, ... equity is so well established that it is an automatic presumption rather than having to be fought for on every individual issue' (p.2). As Reed (1993) argues, organisational sanctioning of an issue like equity in a committee indicates public commitment to that issue. Coinciding with this, the 1990s saw the emergence of third wave feminisms and poststructuralist feminist theory challenging what had gone before.

A feminist deconstruction of language used in the (1997a) handbooks sees the removal of all the 'he's' and the 'chairman' replaced by 'the chair'. This was a very positive move to eradicate the residual power discourses that remain entrenched through language in many social arenas. Women readers were openly encouraged *not* to standardise themselves against the men and in one issue it read: 'don't follow our male counterparts in training, *train how you feel*' (BTA 1997a, p.14). There was a great deal of documentation indicating positive moves in the BTA to create equitable gender relations. For example, the BTA organised *Women's Training Weekends* at which women were encouraged to train in a non-threatening atmosphere. I participated in one such weekend in order to analyse how knowledges and truths were constructed for sportswomen. I was disappointed with the delivery of the sessions. The development of knowledge is constructed in the play of power relations circulating in discourse and cultural practices of and surrounding triathlon. The five women only triathlon training weekends I researched in this study immediately put masculine knowledges and truths in a position of power as *all* the coaches were men. As Rojek (2000) suggests '... the quality of the performance is the main criterion for establishing validity in the power authority relations between actors' (p.9). When applying this to the training weekends, I could see that novice sportswomen were dependent on the directions of the coach. Those who could not produce a legitimate performance in swimming, biking or running

however, were trivialised as athletes and as Harriet suggested were often given *substandard delivery of training by men coaches*.

The teams of men coaches made no effort to highlight issues specifically related to the woman's body and training. They did not create a sensitive environment for the promotion or open discussion of sportswomen's issues. As a woman just starting out in triathlon training I was never made aware of the pitfalls of training *too* hard or eating *too* little to account for my increased workload. Sensitive issues such as amenorrhoea, osteoporosis or patterns of eating were never brought up as topics of discussion. Louise, a fellow member of the club, describes a similar experience on a women only training camp. I asked her:

A: *did they ever address sportswomen's specific knowledge?*

L: *well one training day I went on was completely just for females, um, but it did not go into the medical side of it or anything like that, nor the effects....*

Louise supported the idea of women only training weekends and described them as *men-free havens*: She said: '*...it was just females there without testosterone ridden men, with all that angst, with all that added hassle...*'. Harriet (an elite club member) was however, highly critical of the standard and attitude of coaching that the women received on the women's weekend she attended:

...5 or 6 of us all went down, ...(laughs) and it was good fun ...training wise the coaches were not particularly good and the course was not quite up to scratch, it could have been a lot lot better but we all got on very very well and I think we got and bonded quite well, a good time socially, yes training was just not good really we spent 12 hours in the pool and we did not learn anything, our stroke technique was not analysed, ...sculling up here, and sculling down here while he sat on his chair or chatting with his back to us! Another 12 lengths of sculling – it was a 50m pool! Scull, scull scull! We had to scull on our backs on our fronts, scull backwards, scull forwards, you name it we sculled it!

A: *Why?*

H: *Exactly! We will never know! We were 'feeling the water' apparently! But because there were a lot of novices there and half of them had never done a triathlon before, he should have at least been sitting on the side giving them stroke technique, and analysing everything but he wasn't interested at all. Which was a real shame and I know ----- wrote a letter of complaint about it. It was it was a waste of money really it was such a shame.*

Formal categories created by discourse and social practice function to justify exclusion (Flax 1993). Although the women only training weekends were instigated at the BTA

management level to promote equity in triathlon, in practice, women were underrepresented in powerful roles (coaching) and their positions marginalised (as hospitality manager). Harriet, Sandy and Louise summed up the coaching on the women only sessions as: *always by men who did not take us seriously, and in a tone that was jokey and patronising*. The histo-cultural discourse of sport and coaching has normalised men into positions of power and so increasingly men are involved with coaching women and women's teams (Hargreaves 1994 p.201). This reflects a perpetuated cycle of masculinised power, knowledges and truths in the delivery of triathlon training. How did such discourses of sports coaching become constructed into recognisable and legitimate domains of knowledge? Coach describes the ratio of women to men in triathlon coaching:

C: *there are only three women coaches that are qualified to National level or above,*

A: *is that including you?*

A: *yes,... whereas there are probably 15-20 men. ...even down as far as to club standard and the coach education stuff that we do, you are very lucky if you get more than one woman per course, you are looking at 1 in 12. It is something that we (the BTA) are trying to encourage...*

I asked her *why* the numbers of women in British triathlon coaching was so low despite the equitable policies in the BTA. Her answer reflected upon her personal exasperation of constantly being treated *less than* and *inferior* to *all* male coaches:

I have always regarded coaching as still very much a male dominated thing because women at the high levels are still not seen to be 'of the same standard' as men, although I think that is wrong, certainly the women coaches that are in triathlon at the minute are of equal standing to men

In trying to understand and to explain *why* women have not entered triathlon coaching I could suggest different readings depending upon various feminist approaches. A liberal feminist explanation may be that women have not had the opportunities to get involved in sport or coaching due to socialisation. As Coach reasons:

it is very time consuming, if you do triathlon you have to do it heart and soul it is not the kind of thing that you can pick up and drop down, you know so I think that the women that do do it no matter what their level are very dedicated to it, ... men's leisure time is still far more, far easier to 'justify', whereas women still find that they still have lots of other things that perhaps they still need to do, ... so I think that could be one of the reasons. But certainly those who are achieving at high level now are doing it on the same terms as men, especially at elite level.

Gendered assumptions often perceive that as sport is a masculine arena, men are inherently more competent to coach than women are (Boutilier and San Giovanni 1994). It is assumed that men coaches have greater technical knowledge which automatically affords men a higher status in sports coaching than women. Coach states that triathlon coaching is very time consuming and women often experience a conflict of time between coaching and family responsibilities (Coakley 1986). An equitable domestic division of labour 'appears no match for a discourse of domesticity that 'insists that women must continue to bear the major responsibility for cooking, cleaning, and child-care even when they are working full-time in jobs and in professions formerly reserved for men' (Bordo 1993, p.71). Coach argues that women are culturally entrenched in domestic discourse and often have no time left to commit to triathlon coaching. Another feminist viewpoint may look more specifically at the men's control of coaching and understand this in terms of patriarchal power. As Coach explains:

It is still very difficult to get into the 'elite performance' level, for women, especially now triathlon is paying their elite coaches ... there are no women in British triathlon coaching at that level, ... that is all male dominated.... but with regards to coaching at performance director level or elite men's or women's elite coach I don't know how long it will take to get a woman into that position in this country

Poststructuralists however, suggests that a reverse discourse (Foucault 1978/1976) such as feminism circulates alongside the patriarchy of coaching and gains legitimacy as it works in and against its assumptions. For example in Britain there is evidence of local 'pockets of resistance' (Foucault, 1976) in triathlon coaching and women are often seen in volunteer roles of local coaching. Sadly, in Britain when it comes to the few salaried professional triathlon coaching positions however, as Coach says '*it is another job for the boys*'. At global level women triathlon coaches *are* challenging the legitimacy of existing man-domination at the highest level. Coach told me how USA Triathlon, for the 2000 Olympics, had just appointed a woman coach for both the men's and women's team. There are already three women at National level in British coaching, but sadly here it is the discourses of being a woman, *not* their ability in coaching that is the factor that prematurely pressurises them to leave. As Coach said:

Working with athletes on a full time basis was extremely enjoyable, but the politics and the bias in the sport especially towards women was very frustrating and after a while began to take the edge off this as a career

Even with new overtly equitable organisations of sport like triathlon there is *still* evidence of some resistance to the acceptance of women as athletes or as influential figures in its organisation. Shaw and Slack's (2002) work also found that the imposition of Women's Training Weekends caused some *men* to feel marginalised and to challenge equitable discourses that were at the heart of the organisation. Men wrote letters to the National Governing Body complaining that equity should have considered *their* needs and they should have been able to attend men only sessions. Shaw and Slack (2002) concluded that such claims failed to acknowledge the centrality of men at most training sessions. They also suggest that a lack of consultation and the imposition of 'positive discourses' may in fact have caused more controversy in the construction of gender-power relations than an interactive process might have produced. As Shaw and Slack (2002) argue, this expression of dissatisfaction may be understood as 'resistance to resistance' (p.98). What this illustrates is that 'points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network' (Foucault 1979, p.95). Feminist authors (Francis 2002, Scraton and Flintoff 2002, Wright 2000a) support Foucault's notion that gender relations develop in power relations that are constantly in a state of change and inherently unstable. This example of resistance to resistance, however, counters Foucault's (1979) notion that resistance is for the social good. For example, a men's argument emerged that women only training weekends were not equitable, and this did not further the views of the oppressed (in this case sportswomen) but served to strengthen the men's dominance. The complaints resulted in the BTA issuing a statement that confirmed that the women's training weekends were open to everyone to avoid accusations of discrimination. The protest suggests, however, that the men felt marginalised and threatened that women were a stated group in the official triathlon organisation.

On the residential women's training weekends I experienced a strong sense of camaraderie through the notion of 'women's shared experiences in relation to gender' (Scraton and Flintoff 2002, p.40). As a novice, I learnt far more through the informal expressions of discourse than I did in the formal sessions. For example, I learnt that talc in your shoes ensures a faster transition from swim to bike, and Vaseline between your thighs, under your arms and breasts stops chafing! I suggest that in non-threatening spaces (for example bedrooms) I was privy to *alternative knowledges* of triathlon. By engaging in conversation with sportswomen, hearing their individual stories, listening to women's experiences and sharing ideas, I collected some very rich and insightful data

about how each woman viewed her social world. Women's alternative knowledges and truths were evidence of pockets of resistance to dominant discourses of power (Foucault 1979) in triathlon.

Despite the unique nature of gender relations in the BTA, a reading of later alternative histories in the organisation indicated some challenges to equitable behaviour. The Management and Structure Review (Leisure Futures Limited 1998) was commissioned by the BTA to ensure a management structure in line with the English Sports Council who suggested it should be more linear. Through their suggestions the *Women's Committee* was disbanded at the end of 1998, and incorporated in the Development Committee. This marked the demise of some of the most positive organisational practices and traditions that had been identified as synonymous with equity; for example, the removal of the *Women's News* section, and the general reduction of features on women's competitions. The following year (1999) the members' handbook reverted back to using the gendered language of 'chairman' that had been identified as inequitable by the *Women's Committee* several years previously. This shows that power relations, of which gender relations are a part, were constantly fluctuating in the BTA. As Shaw and Slack (2002) argue these moves occurred at a time when the English Sports Council were encouraging the similar organisations to engage with discourses of professionalism (strategies to promote elite athletes) and thus questioning and distancing itself from its voluntary roots and social justice agenda. Kerfoot and Whitehead (1998) suggest that the adoption of particular professional discourses in an organisation may increase the influence of dominant masculinities. Whether understood as an increase in masculine work practices or a decrease in women's influence, the historical commitment to equity in the BTA was disturbed by the commitment to a specific form of professionalism in which funding and the development of elite athletes overtook the focus on equity. Ironically the English Sports Councils' brief also demanded increased equity, however, the result has been a sharp demise of women centred practices in the BTA.

The formal construction of language in triathlon

Derrida (1978) proposes that we should study how words – speech, writing and sets of communication-based interactions, or *discourse*- limit those whose identity is controlled by them (Kidd 2002). Cultural, symbolic and medical discourses play major roles in supporting and contesting power through language (Macdonald, 1995, p.223). My data shows how systematic ways of thinking (discourses) are built into triathlon's established

patterns of language. In triathlon, the most exclusive discourse was evident with the use of the word *man*. As I have shown above, some gendered language *has* been challenged (for example *chairman*) so that other possibilities can be opened up (for example *chair*). A deconstruction of the formal texts, however, reveals that there are many other areas in triathlon where similar language needs to be challenged. Foucault (1970/1966) shows how language has been used to construct binaries, hierarchies, categories, and classification schemes that are said 'to reflect an innate, intrinsic order of the world' (St. Pierre 2000, p.480). I challenge the BTA's formally expressed discourse surrounding the word *triathlete* as it culturally positions women as inferior to men. The BTA has constructed the word *triathlete* as masculine and in its written text refers to *triathletes* when referring to men. A woman who does triathlon is referred to as a *woman triathlete* or a *female triathlete* which puts her into a category based on *difference*. Triathlon at first appears to categorise races by age and ability. For example, people compete in 5-year age bands with the exception of the elite race which is categorised solely by gender. It is only when the results are published that it is clear that within the age brackets the BTA created the binary of a 'men's race' and 'a women's race'. By using language and culture as sign systems it is possible to show where gender difference is created and how language often privileges the masculine. The exaggeration of gender in triathlon titles automatically materialises the *woman triathlete* or *female triathlete* as having less power than *a triathlete* in the cultural meaning of sport. Poststructural feminist accounts argue that there is no fixed structure to language and also suggest that language is central to the development of subjectivities. My findings show that categorisation through gender is *not* evident when women describe themselves. Each of the women talked about themselves as *a triathlete* which illustrates how the relationship between language and meaning shifts between people, across time and according to varied situations (Scheurich 1997). In poststructural feminisms, the individual is dynamic, an unstable construction of language, discourse and cultural practice.

Hargreaves (2000) contends there is greater social importance attributed to the production and celebration of men's heroism (p.1). Connell (1987) argues that the hero is conventionally male, strong, aggressive and brave. The long distance triathlon events are considered by many to be the ultimate physical and psychological challenges. The word *man* is most evident as an automatic appendage to race titles to illustrate their endurance. The *Ironman*, *Powerman* and *Enduroman* triathlon events formally exclude women from the titles and normalise the *sportsman* as the hero. It is as if women were

not expected to enter or were not perceived to be physically capable of long distance triathlons. Categorisations are executions of power, illustrated in the fact that a woman competitor is called *Ironman*. These titles are made up from a chain of signs whose meanings are relational (for example *power* and *man*; *endurance* and *man*; *iron* and *man*). Derrida (1978) suggests that structures have no meaning apart from that given to them, in this case, by humans in triathlon. It is the use of words by some people to create meaning in triathlon that leads to the lack of power of others (women). In line with Mulvey (1981) the Ironman, Powerman or Enduroman may not necessarily be a man, but rather *masculine*, adopting a masculine subjectivity or subject position. Sportswomen *have* entered into new domains of physicality but long distance triathlons have been culturally constructed as masculine by supporting masculine power through language. It could be argued further that the body of an Ironman, a Powerman and an Enduroman can be read as *texts* on *hyper-masculinity* (Obel 1995)

To sum up, the data indicates that the creation of reason knowledge and truth in the National Governing Body for triathlon favours women's influences and that the dominant discourses in the BTA endeavour to promote equity. The organisational practices of the BTA *have* created various spaces in the organisation through which women have voice. For example, the *Women's Forum*, the *Women's Committee* and the *Handbook for Women* which suggest that gender relations and triathlon histories were created with an emphasis on women's input. This may also affirm that the equitable organisational knowledges about women's abilities and inclusion in triathlon that were created in the BTA equate with power (Foucault 1972/1969). In triathlon the protection of traditions and institutionalised practices suggested a primary commitment to constructing gender relations in a positive manner. The youthful nature of an organisation such as the BTA appears to be the factor in developing equitable discourses.

An alternative reading, however, suggests that these policies do not necessarily consider the difference in power *between* women, for example between women of different race, culture and sexuality. I also found disparity between the BTA's idea of women only training weekends as a way of promoting equity and the inequitable practices (for example in coaching) that I found in the practical setting. As knowledge equates with power, I did experience pockets of resistance through what I suggest is *alternative knowledges* of triathlon. This was the informally expressed discourse visible through the camaraderie *within* groups of women. Training tips, race technique and

other personal experiences were analysed as alternative knowledges and truths that specifically focused on women's bodies. I also found that the formal construction of language in triathlon often creates gender difference (for example the terms *triathlete* and *woman triathlete*). Long distance triathlon has been formally constructed as a men's preserve as the titles ignore women (Ironman, Powerman, Enduroman) and normalises the sportsman as the strong, brave and powerful hero. The woman's body in triathlon is materialised (Butler 1993) through language and cultural practices. In order to challenge the power discourses in triathlon, feminists must regularly deconstruct and reconstruct language to reflect the diversities of triathletes in contemporary society and to constantly trouble the status quo. Poststructural feminisms challenge the discursive language of triathlon and strive to free women from the foundations and absolutes that have constructed them as weak, passive and powerless. If women settle for, as Sandy did: *that's just the way things are in triathlon* as that insinuates that there is some authority outside human activity, whereas, examples have been shown of women and men resisting dominant and reverse discourses.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the research setting. Some of the questions that emerged from the theory were; whose knowledges and truths are reflected in the dominant discourses of the club? Do the equity policies and equitable practices seen in the BTA filter down into the club's own formal and informal histories? Whose voices are heard above the discursive practices that surround the club? Who gets to speak? Where are the silences?

The Triathlon Club

My 3-year ethnography took place in Avon Triathlon Club in the South of England between March 1998 and August 2001. The club's website is often the first version of organisational histories: discourses; knowledges and truths that a potential new member sees. The website was launched in 1999 and it is a dynamic portrayal that is constantly changing to reflect the diversities of the club and reinforcing that power is relational (Foucault 1972/1969). In 2000 it 'sells' triathlon to interested parties as:

Triathlon is an exciting multi-discipline sport for all ages and abilities. It offers you fitness, fun and friendly competition. A triathlon event involves a swim, followed by a cycle ride and then a run - a continuous race against the clock and fellow competitors. Some people prefer Duathlon which involves only two of the disciplines, usually cycling and running. Triathlon was an Olympic event at the Millennium Games in Sydney. It is a sport at which Britain excels - we've had World Champions for four of the past seven years - isn't it time you were involved?

The online introduction to the club goes on to sell the benefits of belonging to Avon triathlon Club:

Membership benefits include 2x swim sessions per week; 1x turbo or time trial session; 1x open water swim in the summer months; a group ride on Saturdays; £11 discount from this years BTA membership, which in turn gives you discount off race entry; 1x club duathlon and 2x club triathlons open to members only; at least 2x breakfasts after club events; entry to the annual club race series; participation in a team for the National Relays; Access to and coaching from (Coach).

Some sports such as cricket and rugby have a clubhouse that acts as a focus for training, communication, competition and social events. Triathlon, however, requires *three different* venues. As a new club member, who knew nothing about triathlon I had to access not one but *three* areas of new activity. I initially felt very isolated. I was technically a member of *a club*, but there was no sense of the close knit environment I was used to in my basketball club. The only time the whole club is invited to train at the same time and place are at the two swimming sessions. These were held at local schools. As over 70% of members regularly attended, the pool was excellent as the focal setting for my participant observation.

Feminist work in the sociology of sport demonstrates how physical activity disciplines women into docile bodies which unquestionably follow a discursive regime (Cole 1993, Duncan 1994, Markula 1995). This work suggests that sport acts a vehicle for the domination of women (Markula 2003). My analysis uses these findings as a starting point and applies them to triathlon. I now analyse the formal and informal creation of discourses; knowledges and truths in the clubs organisational histories. I ask questions such as: how does discourse function in the triathlon club? Where is it to be found? How does it get produced and regulated? What are its social effects? How does it exist?

The club's formal construction of discourse; knowledges and truths

The club was started in 1994 and over the first year it grew to from 4 to 25 members reflecting the growing interest in triathlon. The official 'History of the club' was published on the club's website in 2001. Martin (2000) suggests that the 'truth' may be created from men's perspectives, favouring their actions and marginalising women's. This was true of earlier accounts of the club's history, however, by 2001 resistance to gender-power relations created alternative discourses, knowledges and truths in the club. The creation and reporting of the club histories in 2001 is from a woman's perspective. The heading in bold type gives a note of thanks from the Chairperson (Sandy) which

says: ‘Thanks to Harriet Firth, first ever Avon Womens (*sic*) Club champ for this history!’:

It all began back in March 1994 with Stan Harris (Hon. President) sharing a lane with Tony at a ... swim session. Stan, then the club chairman for Coles Triathletes in ... had just moved to ... and was looking for like minded people to train with. Tony was interested in trying triathlon having come from a swimming and running background, so he and Stan got chatting. Stan decided that the National Relays would be a good event to enter but they need a few more members. The British Triathlon Association also wouldn’t recognise a club until it had 3 members. The first 5 members consisted mainly of ... swimmers who had expressed an interest in triathlon, then through word of mouth the club grew. The numbers jumped quite a bit once a link was established with (*the local running club*)

From 2001 onwards the first voice that a newcomer to the club heard was Sandy, the club chairperson as she introduced the first *ever* woman club champion; Harriet. Harriet then gives a report of the organisational histories from a woman’s perspective. Harriet’s account revealed that in 1994 the first pinnacle position of power (now entitled chairperson) in the club was a woman. This was the *first* time this fact had been mentioned and was completely omitted in an earlier report of the *history* of the club I collected from Stan (the founder). This illustrates how although there may be different views of historical events, one particular version of history may become influential and may thus become understood as ‘the truth’ (Foucault 1972/1969).

Table 2 below illustrates the formal history of membership. The years in red indicate the seasons that I was collecting data in the club:

Table 2 - The Club membership figures taken at the start of each season (April):

Year	Membership	
	Men	Women
1994	3	1
1995	20	5
1996	38	7
1997	40	12
1998	36	13
1999	43	17
2000	45	28
2001	34	31

The figures above show how women’s membership went from only 1 in 1994, 5 in 1995 and then reflects how numbers grew steadily to 13 in 1998 (the year I started my participant observation). The two seasons 1999-2000, 2000-2001 alone saw women’s

membership more than double. 19 women joined the club, which brought the total to 31. The gender ratio of the club was then 31 women and 34 men which means that in 2001 (the final year of my ethnography) almost 50% of members were women.

Gender is also not the only characteristic that should be considered. In my research period all the members were white and able bodied. Only two were openly homosexual (Paula and Sandy), 3 women described themselves as coming from a working class background and 10 from a middle class background. It is important to remember that figures are dynamic, they are constantly open to change according to individual members.

As well as the data from the website I also collected verbal stories in order to gain insight into how power was materialised (Butler 1993) in a multiplicity of sites. As early as 1999 Harriet described the club as a *unique* setting because of the *unusually* large numbers of women (13). She says:

I think that about 15 are women. And most of them participate actively, they actually race, that is a very good turn out, it's meant to be very high, you normally only get 10% of a club being women and we have done really well to get the amount that we've got I think.

Harriet emphasised that it was the fact that women '*actually race*' that made the club unique. This concurs with Hargreaves (2000) who argues that women often have passive roles in sport, as spectators, girlfriends and on the sidelines of competition. All of the participants welcomed the increase in women members. When asked what had changed in the club over the past year Sharon says:

there are a lot more women ... and the statistics of the club, there are 60 members in the club and there are 20 women! I mean that it is just huge and I think that is brilliant!

All of the women perceived the increase in women's participation figures as a positive step towards what they often describe as 'woman-power'. They celebrate the fact that in triathlon women are doing the same training and races as men. Although in 2001 men and women's participation figures are equal, this does not mean that the underlying gender-power relations in the club are equitable. What matters is how particular techniques or forms of power are used. I now discuss some of the formal cultural practices in the club and analyse them in terms of the construction of gender power relations; discourses; knowledges and truths.

The Committee

The club committee consists of a group of individuals who collectively make all the important decisions about how the club is run. The committee is thus regarded as the main gatekeeper of power. I suggest that it could also be an example of Foucault's (1983a) 'techniques of government' (p.19) which he argues can create states of domination in power relations. The formally expressed histories of the committee reflect how dominant gender-power relations are constructed in the club. There is a committee meeting every month and each season has an Annual General Meeting (AGM). Members are encouraged to attend the AGM in order to elect the following year's representatives. Table 3 shows a histo-numerical break down of the committee by gender:

Table 3: The Committee

Year	Committee members
1994	3 men 1 woman
1995	3 men 1 woman
1996	5 men 1 woman
1997	5 men 1 woman
1998	5 men 1 woman
1999	7men 2 women
2000	8 men 5 women
2001	6 men 6 women

The first ever pinnacle position on the committee in 1994 was a woman. She was initially recruited from the local swimming club to make the new club (of 3 men) eligible to compete in the National Relays, a team event where it is compulsory to have one woman in the team. On the website Susan Firth is referred to as the *Chairperson*, however, there are no official documents that record her official title. The three men who founded the club, also were on the committee in 1994.

By 1995 the club had grown to 25 members. Susan had stepped down as Chairperson to go back to swimming and been replaced by Stan. Harriet who had just joined the club was invited (by Stan her partner) to join the committee. I suggest Harriet's knowledges and truths were taken seriously in the triathlon organisation because she was already an *elite* triathlete. She trained hard (with the three founding men) and both competed in and won major events. Harriet's status in triathlon automatically brought public recognition to the club. Harriet told me how in those early days the club needed a woman on the committee to *attract other women to join*. She states *when I first joined there were only about 20 members and I could beat most of them so I didn't get any problems at all!* She

referred to 'problems' as issues of sexism. Had Harriet been a novice woman, however, the story may have been different.

Harriet's first role on the committee was as Secretary and then later Newsletter Editor. Both are secretarial roles that involve keeping minutes, typing and mail drops. It could be argued that secretarial work has been histo-culturally constructed as feminine (Hargreaves 1994). Harriet's role as an unpaid secretary of the club could be seen as an example of a sexual division of labour in sport (Scruton and Flintoff 2002). It could be argued that as a woman she was being constrained by discourses associated with the cultural practices of triathlon. This assumes, however, that Harriet is a 'docile body' who is not active or capable of making her own choices. Harriet emphasised that she volunteered to be secretary and went on to describe the very forthright role she found herself taking in meetings '*so the men would not get all their own way!*' Harriet was a subject who was contesting dominant discourses of power from below and taking small steps towards constructing alternative truths.

In 1996 there was a notable change in the club's acknowledgement of women in triathlon. Sharon moved to the area and joined the club. She says: *We moved here ... three years ago, and we, you just get the booklet, we needed to join the local club to train with, so you get the BTA handbook and just rang up and started training for the club.* Sharon was already a big name in triathlon as she was a member of the British Triathlon Squad and was identified as a potential Olympic medal winner. She was the club's only full time triathlete, who had her own coach and lucrative sponsorship deals. Consequently, from 1996 Sharon became the principle role model for both women *and* men in the club. There were some examples of reverse resistance, however, from some of the men who were obviously threatened by a sportswoman being publicly perceived as the best. During our dialogue Jackie told me *one guy said to me that he thought that the club was Sharon Best's fan club!* This suggests that to some members gender obviously did matter culturally. Sharon was often abroad and so did not get involved in the committee, and rarely even trained at club sessions. She did, however, make an effort to come to the socials and help with club races. Despite her absence, and notwithstanding pockets of reverse resistance, Sharon represented a professional standard of triathlon that most men and women in the club aspired to reach. In the early years organisational practices of the club appeared to be materialised with an appreciation of femininities.

Power, resistance and freedoms in the formally expressed discourses of the club

Over the three years I noticed how gender-power relations began to change in the club. Women's voices appeared to grow louder. This was in contrast to what was happening in the BTA, as 1998 saw women's voices being reduced, with the loss of the *Women's Committee* and the *Women's News* section from the handbook. The individual voices that were regularly heard were: Sandy, Martha, Jackie, Paula and Louise. They began to campaign for more women's representation on the committee. In 1999 there was the first formal expression of women's resistance in the club with the newly created appointment of 'Women's Representative'. The club's newsletter gave the description of the new role: ... *to better represent the views of the women in the club to the committee and to encourage greater participation in training and racing* (Club Newsletter March 1999, p.3). My field notes reflect upon the occasion when Martha was proposed and then voted unanimously in as the first women's representative at the Annual General Meeting 18th January 1999. This was the first gatekeeper role to be held by a woman since 1994. Martha was an excellent choice as in the interviews she often talked about the gender-power imbalances in the club. Her enthusiasm, however, was tainted with some scepticism as she states:

Yes I am the first one ever, which is a good sign but I don't know whether it was a token, or whether it was a serious move to get more women involved. And by the end of this year it is going to be a serious move to get more women involved!

Through my dialogue with Martha she conveyed that she saw her role as political. She wanted to get women active in formal decisions of the club rather than the focus being on solely increasing women's participation figures. She reflects upon gender-power relations in her first committee meeting:

there was Harriet, Jeff, two, three four five, six men and two girls ... and it was mainly Stan and Jeff, that more or less led the meeting, more or less dictated the format, the style and what was included and what was not. Which won't go on for long I can tell you from the start! As I will put my two pennies worth in ...

Martha noticed how, in the committee meeting, discourses expressed by the men were favoured over those expressed by most women. Martha took a political stance and was determined to challenge what she perceived to be a discourse of patriarchy in the committee. Martha's political behaviour was an example of a consciously planned critical resistance to a triathlon practice. Revolt, however, is not a unified version of freedom. A feminist Foucauldian notion of power places emphasis on the *everyday*

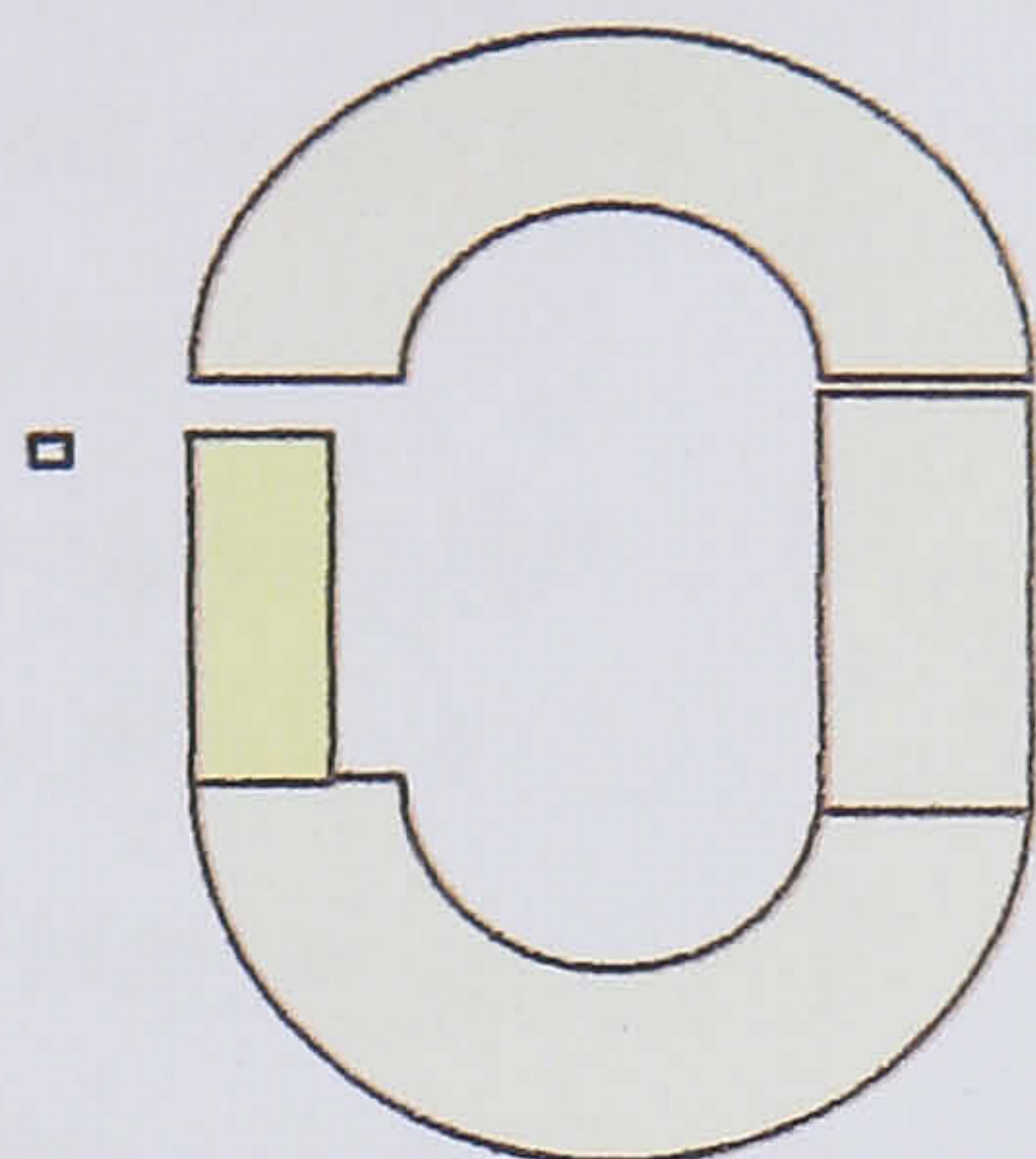
experiences and agency of *individual* women. Martha's resistance was through a set of successful fragmented battles in everyday practices (Foucault 1980). For example, the gendered construction of language used in the club was successfully contested. In 1999 the word *Chairman* was changed to *Chairperson*. This was a very positive move to destroy the residual power discourses that remain ingrained through language and mirrored similar equitable policies in the BTA. The changes show how alternate equitable discourses can be circulated alongside the patriarchal discourses of the club and slowly gain legitimacy as they work in and against its assumptions.

I pinpoint the years 1999-2001 as a defining period when gender-power relations were seriously challenged in the club. Foucault (1979) suggests the possibilities of resistance and how such transformations will only emerge gradually through 'local and often minute shifts in power' (p.28). Martha, I identify as one such pocket of resistance to formally and informally expressed masculinised discourses. At every committee meeting, Martha ensured that there was an appreciation of both masculinities and femininities, for example when ordering club kit.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is a cultural practice of triathlon that reflects how formally expressed and informally expressed discourses are both constructed and resisted in the club. The AGM (2000) was a turning point for gender- power relations. It attracted a record number of members. My research diary tells the story:

February 9th 2000. AGM: ...last year the move to appoint a women's representative was crucial for women in the club, but tonight there was an indication of the political direction that the club is being encouraged to move over the forthcoming year. ... to include more women in positions of power and to focus more on novices (rather than ready made athletes), as beginners are the biggest category of new members. Last year the meeting took place in the small back room of a local pub, only about 10 people turned up, only three were women (including me). This year the club had rented a hall in a local sport centre and before the meeting the committee arranged the chairs in a circle with the committee table at the top:

Figure 1: Layout of chairs before the meeting

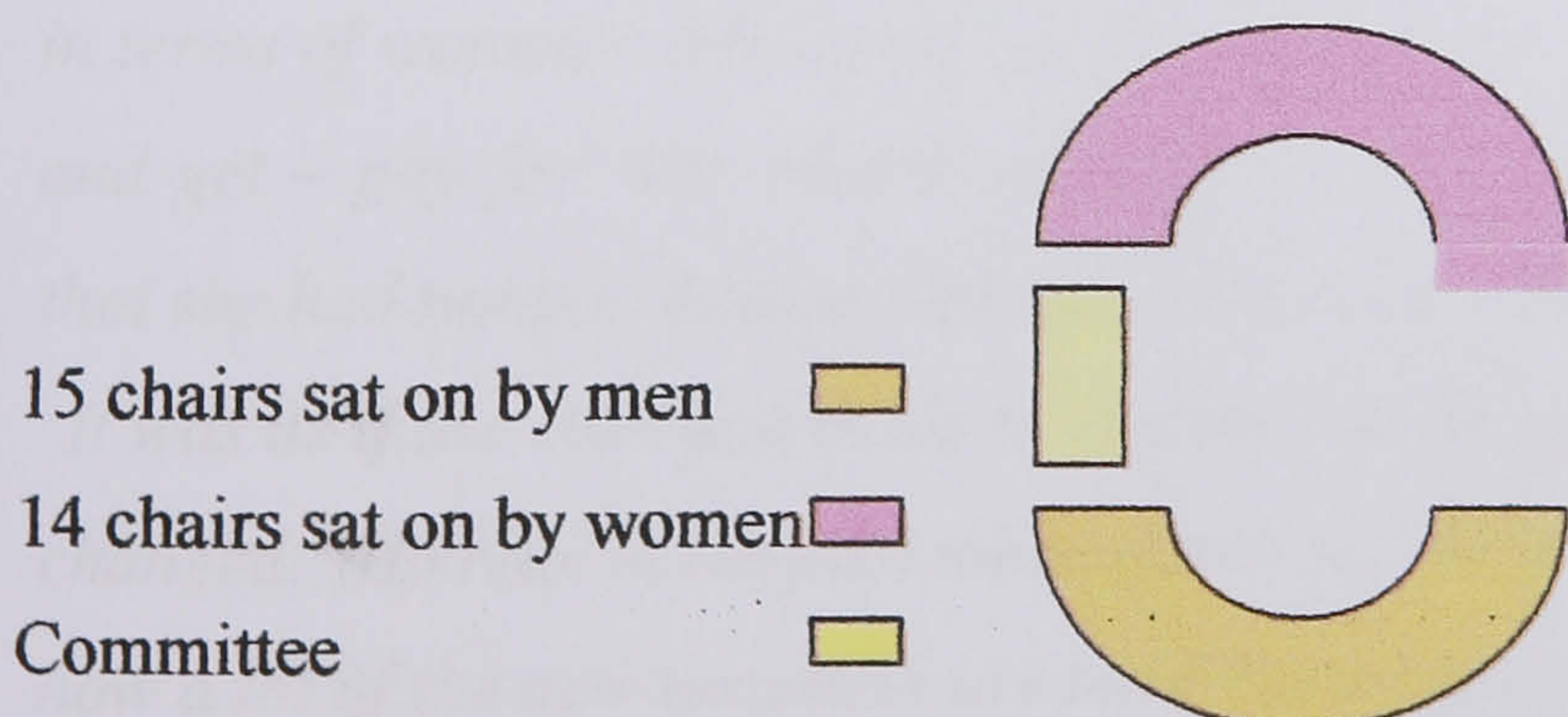


16 chairs for members

Committee

I walked in with Martha, and the only other woman in the room was Harriet as she was on the committee. ... slowly other members started to filter in. It was immediately noticeable how the men and women started to migrate to separate sides of the room, and as more came in and sat down so the gendered spaces became more obvious! The members started moving the chairs either one end or the other. At the start of the meeting there were 15 women and only 14 men. The men started to comment on this and it seemed to upset them (although they joked about it). The men openly acknowledged that they were 'outnumbered' and how 'it was a take over'. Members came in and chose where to sit. It was a few of the men however, that created a gap between the men and the women at the top of the circle. This resulted in two separate gendered spaces in the room. The women presented a strong, united and confrontational position and the men copied. Figure 2 below shows how the gendered spaces evolved:

Figure 2: Layout of chairs at the start of and during the meeting



15 chairs sat on by men

14 chairs sat on by women

Committee

Some men even cheered when another man walked in as if it were a competition! With late comers the final count was 17 men and 16 women. It is important to mention at this point that Sharon was not present which makes the whole story that follows even more fascinating. Up until this point I had observed little evidence of what some researchers would see as a subculture of womanhood. Sharon was very much the figurehead of the club (respected by both men and women), but tonight, individuals were definitely

bonding as a group of sportswomen and successfully showing a united front. The Chairperson gave his report, and the treasurer his financial report, then the meeting was opened to the floor.

Louise said that the club needed to change what she described as its 'elitist outlook'. She went on to say that in the early days the club attracted 'ready-made' elite triathletes, however, over the last few years this has changed and now the biggest area of new members in the club is novices (mainly women). Louise said 'Avon does not cater adequately for us beginners'. There was a hum of agreement that emanated from the women's section of the room. The majority of responses to this were women who openly began to voice their opinions on the club. Individual women (Sandy, Paula, Jackie, Louise, Martha, and Tina) began to recall stories of how they had felt intimidated when they first joined the club. Louise said 'If it hadn't have been for my personality I would have not come back after the second week'. This statement produced numerous nods in the women's camp and a few from the novice men. She went on to say 'I know that all you good people do not remember how it feels to not know anything, but it is very daunting to see all these fit bodies, and then there is me, floundering around in the water! I did not know anything about triathlon except that I knew that I wanted to have a go. I felt that I was very much on my own and I was left to figure it out on my own. Consequently I wasted £350 buying a bike that was too big for me. I feel that the club needs to guide people more, and encourage them not to drop out. God knows what I was doing back at the start, and how on earth I did that race! I probably did myself permanent damage!' Jackie backed Louise up and said 'I have got very little from Avon in terms of women's advice and support as a beginner, what I now know I had to go out and get – pay for' The chairperson then asked what exactly did she need that she felt that she had not got. Louise replied 'A lot more hand holding to be quite honest.'

It was as if the club was made to realise that the profile of membership had now in fact changed. Whereas in the past the majority were elite athletes or the aspiring elite, in fact now a lot of the new members are total beginners, or at least novices. As the club is only 8 years old, it was obviously formed by athletes who ... were already good. This makes the whole ethos of the club different now. It has to cater for a different clientele, and not assume that everyone that goes to the club has expert knowledge. Individuals are looking at the club to provide them with knowledge.

There was a focus on gender-roles when the issue of kit was raised. The subject of polo shirts with the club logo on prompted a discussion over printing, and one of the guys

said that they would prefer to get them embroidered. This prompted Martin to make a joke of ‘The women could do them!’ An outbreak of hysteria then followed from the men’s section and cries of outrage from the women. This embroidery joke ran for the rest of the meeting.

A new committee was elected at the end of the meeting. As a result of the comments, it was agreed to create a new position of New Members Representative who would act as an initial ‘buddy’ for new members. This year women were elected to nearly half of the committee positions: Publicity Officer; Women’s Rep; New members Rep; Secretary; Social Secretary. Five out of the 8 positions were voted in as women (see appendix 1). ... I left the meeting with a smile on my face because I felt that some formerly marginalised voices (women, especially novices) had made themselves heard and made a difference.

During my research I attended three annual AGMs and over that period of time I observed how discourses of power *can* gain access to individual women’s bodies and in turn influence their gestures and their daily actions (Foucault 1980). This AGM was a key event for the construction of alternate histories of the club. It was clear that marginalised voices, those of women, were keen to trouble the status quo. 16 women clearly turned up at the AGM (2000) to *be seen* and to have their *voices heard*. Each woman was determined not just to be a silent name on a list, and some (Louise, Sandy, Martha, Harriet) came with a definite political agenda and a list of issues to raise. In Harriet’s second interview I asked her:

A: Do you remember that committee meeting? ...

H: Yes, all the women that turned up, and the men were sitting on the other side!

A: The women outnumbered the men at one point!

H: Yes, that was really good actually and I think that we tried to put across some points – I think that we were listened to!

Resistance, like power, is an effect of a relation of power. The AGM (2000) saw a challenge to the masculinised control of the committee and contested the discourse of elitism in the club. It also gave voice to those who are silenced or marginalised in the cultural narrative of triathlon (primarily women). The ideas raised in the AGM were examples of resistance as freedom (Foucault (1978/1976) where there was a move towards cultural practices that appreciated both masculinities *and* femininities in the club. Individual women recounted in the interviews how they had felt empowered at the AGM and Paula, Claire, and Tina commented upon how they surprised themselves by

speaking out. This is an example of how bodies can be invested with various and changing forms of power, and that gendered identities are fractured, shifting and unstable (Foucault 1980). It also showed how marginalised voices (for example women, and especially novice-women triathletes) can exhibit practices of self-development that transcend dominant discourse.

At the AGM (2000) as well as individual voices, I observed (for the first time) alternate knowledges being voiced through what appeared to be an accordant community of sportswomen. This was the point where I thought that Foucault's idea of localised resistance may be limited. While his relational understanding of power *is* key to my theoretical framework, when I came to theorise some of the shifts in gender-power relations, his idea appeared to ignore the macro practices of oppression (Ashton-Shaeffer, Gibson, Autry and Hanson 2001). It was necessary, therefore, to expand Foucault's ideas in order to theorise the development of what I thought might be a collective resistance at the AGM (2000). I could see how individuals had gained confidence from other women and were working together to secure change. Guthrie and Castlenuovo (2001) and Ashton-Shaeffer et al. (2001) find Foucault opening a space for women's resistance in sport, but echoing Hartsock (1990) they argue that his theory does not allow for collective resistance. I referred to the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962) who theorises an embodied and collective resistance for ideas. I saw the strength of his work in his concept of human subjectivity, located not in the mind but in the body (Castelnuovo and Guthrie 1998). Both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault view the body as the critical source of social analysis. Foucault's (1978/1976) work *does* theorise how resistance to asymmetrical relations of power (for example the committee) can involve 'mobilizing groups of individuals in a definite way' (p.96) which may be the type of resistance I witnessed at the AGM. This would concur with Ashton-Shaeffer et al. (2001) who took Foucault's thinking on 'identity constitution further to incorporate the ideas of group-based definitions and affirmation that result in empowerment and transformation' (p.98). Guthrie and Castlenuovo (2001) also conclude that competitive sport could provide individual empowerment and act as the most effective collective resistance against dominant discourses.

The club's dominant discourses of power *were* challenged through groups of individual women and especially novices behaving politically resulting in a mobile transitory point of resistance. According to Foucault all political action becomes a product of some regime of power and as a result we cannot escape power or be

liberated from it through a programme for political resistance. Foucault's programme of local resistance centres on his argument that, as contextual, historical beings, launching local resistant efforts against specific regimes is more effective than trying to formulate universal theories to justify acts of resistance (Heckman 1990, p.183). Fundamental to Foucault's project was his understanding of the individual in changing power relations.

Even before the meeting, the men clearly began to feel uncomfortable with the number of women arriving. The men suddenly found themselves on unfamiliar ground and felt threatened. Consequently, some men started to make jokes about 'a take over' and physically parted the chairs to make two obvious gendered spaces. They were also turning the meeting into a competition by clapping and even cheering when another man came in and booing when a woman walked through the door. During the course of the meeting it was obvious that some men felt that some women were 'encroaching too far, into what had always been male sanctuaries' (Willis 1982). At every opportunity some men 'symbolically vaporised' (Willis 1982) and reconstituted woman back into the realms of domesticity and compliance with the comments about how it was the women's role to embroider the club polo shirts. These were examples of reverse resistance (Foucault 1978/1976) which were practices that perpetuated the dominant discourses of power and where women were being constructed, confirmed or constrained by discourses of femininity.

Pockets of local resistance had been successfully gathering power at the margins (Foucault 1979) for several years, and eventually I could see that barriers were breaking down. All the women, and the majority of men (although grudgingly) members at last were receptive to new possibilities and alternative rationality, knowledges and truths. I suggest these individual challenges were resistance as freedom (Foucault 1978/1976).

A few months after the AGM (2000) the club took another formal step that was crucial for power relations. The committee published a formal equity statement on the official launch of the 2nd edition of the club website. The Avon Triathlon Club Equity Statement reads:

Avon triathlon club aims to ensure that all people irrespective of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, creed, colour, social status, religious or sexual orientation, have a genuine and equal opportunity to participate in triathlon at all levels of performance and in all roles. We also aim to ensure that all present and potential members/employees of the club receive fair and equal treatment through services provided.

This illustrates the club's formal commitment to equity. The club gives assurance that all members would have 'a genuine and equal opportunity to participate in triathlon *at all levels of performance* and in *all roles*' (which were the two main themes that emerged from the AGM). This equity policy had a positive effect on the formal expressed discourses elsewhere in the club's text. On the website the welcome address emphasises that the club is suitable for everyone, not just the elite:

Whether you aspire to be a world champion, middle of the pack athlete or just fancy doing some "cross training", joining (*the club*) can help provide a focus.

Another example of the formal expression of women's resistance in the club was seen the following year. For 6 years the chairperson had been a white, heterosexual, middle class man, and an able bodied intermediate triathlete. At the AGM in February 2001 however, yet again histories were rewritten. The new *Chair* elected (with a big majority vote) was Sandy, a white, middle class, lesbian woman who was a novice triathlete. 12 committee positions were up for re-election at the AGM 2001. By the close of the meeting 6 of the positions, were filled by women. Also, for the first time, women took organisational roles on the two race committees (Appendix 1).

The club's two formal channels of communication are the e-group and the monthly club newsletter. These are a mixture of formally expressed discourse (notices and news directly from the committee) and informally expressed discourse (individual members' voices).

The e-group

The e-group started in December 1999 and 42 people signed up to use it. Daily formal club messages are sent via the e-group, and individuals in turn can address the committee, groups or other individual members. The e-group facilitates the co-ordination of bike rides or runs, posts the training schedules for the swim sessions, reminds members of races, posts results or AGM minutes and acts as a forum for personal advice. As all members can post notices, instigate a debate, or contribute to a discussion, this is another example of an equitable practice in the triathlon club as it is another forum where individual women's voices can be heard. For example, in 2000 Martha stood down as women's representative and Tina was elected to replace her. The day after the AGM, Tina used the e-mail to post her acceptance which read:

I am pleased to accept the post of this season's Women's Representative, but you have to tell me what you want!

This opened the lines of communication and women then mailed in suggestions of how to make the club more equitable and the changes individuals would like to see. Other women made contact with Tina via the e-mail then arranged to talk to her in private over concerns they felt that they did not want to air to the whole e-group. All the women interviewed thought the e-group was a good idea as it made being a member of Avon a less isolated experience and enabled new members to quickly make contacts. Louise joined before the e-group and especially (as she came from a non-sporting background) found what she describes as *breaking in to the club* very difficult. Louise says:

I didn't meet anyone from the club ...until I did a triathlon. But when I started meeting people 'en masse' it was very difficult to 'break rank' to break in, because then you went back to being the 'outsider' you were the new person and you didn't know anybody and they didn't know you ... that was very intimidating, and not very welcoming, ... it was hard to break through the ranks, they were all very welcoming, once you were swimming, but when you had your clothes back on and you were socialising it was very cliquey.

The e-group gives newcomers a less daunting way into the club where they can introduce themselves initially from a distance, and make contacts with others at a similar level. As a researcher, the content of the e-mails provided me with a wealth of rich descriptive data that I could easily collect. The members and potential new recruits (men and women) who had *not* got access to a computer or e-mail however, I identified as the marginalised voices.

The Club Newsletter

Another formal presentation of the club's histories is through its monthly newsletter (which is a 20-page booklet). Harriet is Newsletter Editor and individual members are invited to contribute accounts of races (for example in the June 1998, one man wrote of his experiences at his first Ironman race in Lanzarote). First impressions of the magazine are of a mass of boxes filled with numbers, times and race results. Headings include: Social Events; Swimming; Improvement Scheme; Sin Bin; Race Results; Race Reports; Club Race Calendar and Member's List. Women are marginalised from the bulk of written text although they are a separate category in the race section that post times. All women I interviewed said that they would like to see more articles and photos of women in all formal triathlon text. Triathlon performances by women have surpassed the men on the international arena. Harriet and Sharon were selected to represent Great Britain in two consecutive World Championships and Tina competed in her first World

Championship in 2001 as a Veteran. Sharon went to Sydney and competed in the 2000 Olympics. It was in the club's interest not to marginalise women but to create a vision of knowledge that included and valued their performances in the club's publicity.

The formally expressed discourses of the club *did* celebrate women's achievements especially in the run-up to the Olympics. The day that Sharon competed in Sydney there was a club house party to watch the race live and to cheer her on. Some of us were out in Australia in person, cheering Sharon on from the side of the road in our Avon t-shirts. The newsletter ran a diary of her experiences at the Olympic Games.

Some of the stories that were published in the club newsletter, however, did *not* reflect equity. In October 1998, the following article was submitted and published under the pretence of being Mike's account of the National Team relays. It started off with a usual account of distances and times but half way down the page in capital letters it read:

**WARNING – DO NOT READ FURTHER IF YOU DO NOT
FIND POLITICALLY INCORRECT MATERIAL OFFENSIVE.**

Now I am a good example of the New man as any that you will find, why only last week I ironed nearly all my own shirts, but there is another attraction to Triathlon that needs exploring. Does Triathlon have beneficial effect on the female body? As a happily married man it would of course be impossible for me to comment objectively so I carried out my own mini survey amongst some of the young males at Nottingham. I asked the question. 'Is triathlon tops for totty?' The results were 90% said 'yes'

5% said they preferred looking at bikes

5% said that they would stick with their own brand of washing powder
So there you have it more physically attractive women take part in triathlon than any other sport and quite a lot of them take part in the National Team Relays. If you're a bloke that's a powerful reason to take part next year, in fact we could brand the event 'The National Team Drool-Feast' and forget about the physical activity all together. Heart rate monitors for veterans like me would of course be compulsory

The article concluded with the slander of his own wife:

The award for outrageous colour co-ordination goes to the lady who wore a pair of shiny leopard skin shorts on the cycle although she was nearly beaten by the girl in the lime green wetsuit who looked like an alien as she climbed out of the water, in fact I shouted to my wife, 'Jane They've come back for you at last!' (Mike, Newsletter, 1998).

This informally expressed discourse reduced successful sportswomen to objects of desire and rendered them as docile bodies available for the male gaze (Hargreaves 1994). In his account the sexual identity is given precedence over the triathlon identity

of a sportswoman. The woman's body may be good at triathlon, but for him, in this instance, it is there as 'triathlon totty', an object of sexual desire to give men pleasure (which it clearly did). As Willis (1982) argues 'If a woman seems to be encroaching too far, and too threateningly, into male sanctuaries, she can be symbolically vaporised and reconstituted as an object, a butt for smutty jokes and complacent elbow nudging' (p.35). This was, however, written and published at the start of my research in 1998, and as Harriet says *no similar material has been allowed since the equity statement*. This in itself reflects that the gatekeepers of power (in this case Harriet as Newspaper Editor) are also more aware of how damaging such stories can be to sportswomen.

To summarise, from the data it was possible to identify the dominant discourses in the club and the cultural practices that surround it. The dominant discourses (all immersed in power relations) that emerged from the data were:

- The discourses of performance: these overlap with discourse of attainment and success, winning, and are often aligned with the discourse of masculinity
- The discourses of femininity: these are seen as two strands, the first includes the discourse of reproduction and the discourse of domesticity (women's roles as mothers and as carers in the home). The second strand includes the discourse of attractiveness and the discourse of sexualisation (the feminine appropriated body image of being slender, toned, bulgeless and sagless).
- The discourse of patriarchy; based upon asymmetrical gender power relations in favour of men.

During the three years I was observing the triathlon club (1998 to 2001) I was part of a notable shift in gender-power relations, knowledges and truths in the organisation. By 2001, women's participation figures had increased threefold but most importantly the club formally acknowledged women through its creation of the new role of woman's representative and Sandy as chair of the committee in 2001. These initiatives created spaces in which women's marginalised voices could be heard. They showed the club's commitment to equity and positioned women at the heart of the club. The new website formally published the first Avon Triathlon Equity Statement which showed yet another serious support of equity.

There were however, also examples of reverse resistance (Foucault 1978/1976) (for example the embroidery joke at the AGM (2000), and the 'triathlon totty' story in the newsletter 1998). These were practices where women's subjectivities were constructed,

confirmed or constrained by residual discourses of femininity, domesticity and sexualised banter.

I suggest that my data on women's resistance to the formal histories of the club were as Castelnovo and Guthrie (1998) suggest 'real-world feminist politics-that is, the coalitions of differently identified women working together ...' (p.4). This form of empowerment was an emergent theme but one to which I needed to apply additional feminist theory to further the analysis. To establish the relationship between the truth self and power, Foucault (1988) argues that power both subjugates *and* makes subject to (Markula 2003). There were many examples in the formal organisation of histories where the sportswoman, as a subject, *was* active in the negotiation of discursive practices, challenging, resisting and transforming herself whilst creating new agency for her body (Bordo 1993). Such practices of women's *resistance as freedom* (Foucault 1997/1984, p.167) were also seen when individuals worked together (for example at the AGM (2000)) and gained legitimacy through the creation of alternate forms of language; discourses; knowledges and truths.

Chapter Six focuses on the women and their lives. I give each woman voice to tell her story and then analyse the data using my theoretical framework constantly asking questions such as where is the power and what are the dominant discourses that are impacting on each woman's subjectivities?

Chapter Six: The subjectivities of the women's social worlds; discourse; power, resistance and freedoms; knowledges and truths

The women's stories

The process of telling one's story, of it being heard and it being taken seriously, is the first step to greater empowerment for individual women in sport. From being part of the women's culture I was aware that I had heard alternate knowledges and truths about triathlon. The conversations in the changing rooms, on courses, at socials and in the interviews were all examples of women's everyday knowledges and truths about the way in which they perceived themselves and their social worlds.

In the first part of this chapter I give each woman voice to tell the story of her early life and how she became embodied in sport. My methodology allows the women space to say what is important to them. I then analyse the stories in terms of the way in which I perceive what count as knowledges and truths, discourses of power, and freedom. The chapter headings are dictated by emergent themes from the data.

In this chapter each woman's story derives out of the way she 'drew' her social worlds and then explains how it represents her sense of self and the subjectivities she experiences. I then analyse the women's social worlds in line with Bordo's (1993) cultural currents specifically looking at the overlaps of her cultural currents in order to understand the subtleties of each woman's subjectivities. Butler (1993) is used to see triathlon as a performance and how women maintain their subjectivities as triathlete performativity. The women's stories show how the relationship between the truth, self and power both subjugate *and* makes subject to (Markula 2003) in different ways and at different times through language; discourse; power, resistance and freedoms; knowledges and truths. Each woman's experiences have in turn impacted upon her embodied subjectivities and her subjective understanding of triathlon and her body.

Each woman now tells (*italics denote the women's own voices*) the first scene of her story:

Martha's story, scene one

I grew up with my two brothers just outside Dublin. ... My father was the breadwinner and my mother was very much the homemaker. My father brought the

money home and my mother made it stretch. ...I started off as a kiddy running, as running is the cheapest sport for schools to do. I always did the longest distance, so, as a child it was a 60m and an 80m race, for the age group, and I did the 80m when it was the 80m and the 100m, I did the 100m. At the 200m stage (when I was probably 10 or 11) I was the 4th best in Dublin. ...I was very happy but I also got very disillusioned very quickly, because when I went back to my club there was no pride and no sense of achievement because I had come fourth. I had not come first or second, or third I had come fourth. ... I became very disillusioned with this and I thought no, if I do well in a race I want to do it for myself. I want to feel a sense of achievement. I do not want to feel that I've not done well, or that I should have done better, because I thought that coming fourth was brilliant! I very quickly isolated myself from that very competitive nature of sport, which was quite sad really because I could have probably been quite good, but I am not into this 'win at all costs'. So, I started doing longer and longer distances all the time because the emphasis is different. More or less working up to the age of 17 when I entered my first marathon. And that was brilliant that was an achievement. ...My goal was to complete a marathon, not to come first or to come second. And I then moved over to England. Although I still enjoyed running I was very frightened running over here, ... I didn't enjoy being out running on the roads, I did most of my running at night, because I felt that nobody was looking at you. You can run in secret at night. ...I didn't like people seeing me running, because I felt very inhibited in London, but also I felt threatened out there at night for my own safety. ... I went and did weight lifting for two years, ... I was achieving; yet there was no pressure on me to lift a certain weight, or to enter a certain competition. It was very goal orientated in the sense of I want to do what I want to do, I do not want other people to be dictating how I lead my sporting life.

Tennis for three years, ... karate for two years. ... I went into Karate because maybe subconsciously I wanted to feel more self-confident when I was running ...on the runs I wanted to feel safe. ... I would be able to defend myself, so then I could run as much as I liked. ... I was 27. So, quite old to take up an aggressive sport. I loved the aggression against a bag, I loved the physical exertion, it was a mentally and physically gruelling sport, very, very challenging. I got disillusioned with that because I got to a level of a brown belt and the next level was black, and to do that I had to do serious competitions, and my tutor wanted me to fight for the

club, and to go in for proper national competitions and I thought no. I don't mind hitting a bag, I don't mind pretending to hit people, but I am not into hitting people and I am not into people hitting me neither, so I thought no, not for me.

... I was very aware because of my nursing that, I would eventually end up being injured, with running a lot. ... I felt that the way I could reduce the risk was to reduce the exercise in one specific sport and to do something like a triathlon. I couldn't swim, major problem! So I took swimming lessons and learnt how to swim, and before the lessons I told Rod that I was going to do a triathlon, and he laughed, so that was my spur, and I was adamant that I was going to do it. I took swimming lessons, had a bike, and went into my first triathlon with absolutely no training. ... I joined the club in August 1997 and it has been brilliant, I have found they are really good, really supportive.

Martha starts her story with a lot of technical times and distances which could be argued as a masculine delivery. This could reflect Martha's childhood, as the telling of these sporting achievements was clearly entrenched in a discourse of patriarchy that constructed and constrained her growing body to serve the prevailing relations of power in the home through dominance and subordination. There was a division of labour in the family and her role was constructed by the discourses of femininity. Martha learnt from an early age that the home was a gendered environment in which she was different from her brothers. The '*men of the house*' (her father and 2 brothers) were expected to execute all the manual tasks, whereas she was expected to help her mother with keeping house. At this point patriarchal discourses constructed her in a domestic role and constrained her in femininity. Many feminist studies have addressed this issue, arguing for example, that girls take up gender roles in multiple and contradictory ways, simultaneously accommodating and resisting them (Riddle 1989, Lees 1993). Martha's behaviour even at 9 years old, however, was resisting the discourses of femininity and moving towards resistance as freedom (Foucault 1978/1976) as she would devise practices where she would help put the shed up *and then* go in to set the table for dinner.

Martha was good at physical play such as climbing trees. Her sporting behaviour and her short hair, however, were both symbolic of resisting discourses of femininity, and consequently she was referred to as a tomboy in her family and the Catholic community.

Martha's school encouraged her to join a running club and her parents supported her. Martha may have been channelled into running as it has histo-culturally been constructed as a 'feminine appropriate sport' (Lenskj 1986, Hargreaves 1994). The discourse of performance dominated her running club. When she came 4th in the country under 12s race her achievement was not recognised as good enough by the man coach or by the club. Her experience may have been a trigger that moulded the emphasis she placed on her sport in the future.

When living in London the discourses of femininity and patriarchy dictated *when* she ran. Martha was self-conscious about her body and to avoid the gaze (Hargreaves 1994), she ran at night. Martha was conscious of the asymmetrical relations of power when she expressed concerns over her personal safety (from men) whilst out running after dark. Martha perceived her practices in martial arts to be transgressive. They gave her the knowledge to defend herself, but she also implied that it would help to neutralise the power imbalances that exist between men and women (Castelnuovo and Guthrie 1998). Martha's sporting practices took on many forms (tennis, weightlifting, and karate), however, what always remained constant were the intrinsic reasons she gave for participating; personal goals and enjoyment. Martha was conscious of the dominant discourse of patriarchy in sports coaching and clearly gives examples of how she resisted the discourse of performance in sport that expects talented bodies to compete. She made a conscious decision in her early years that the dominant discourse of contemporary sport "*were not going to dictate how she lived her sporting life*". Martha's practices of self-development that transcend the discourse of performance and patriarchy could be labelled as resistance as freedom (Foucault 1997/1984) because they have a conscious agency. Martha took part in her first triathlon with no specific training, her motivation was an intrinsic goal of completing the race.

To summarise, Martha found the discourses of performance (competition, attainment, and winning) of be *the* focus of every sport she tried. She makes the point that in contemporary sport there is no positioning available for talented athletes who resist the discourses of performance. Martha found that recreational sport is not set up to cater for talented athletes, as there is an assumption that if you are good enough you will *want* to compete.

Harriet's story, scene one

When I was seven I started doing gymnastics, ... until I was eleven ... I did not eat much ... and there came a day that my wrists just collapsed on me whilst I was somersaulting and I damaged my neck so I stopped that straight away ... it was a time when I had just got into running at secondary school. I had won all the races and they sent me to a local club. I took up running from there and ran various levels for years at different levels, for county, mainly 800m and 1500m and I did county for that, and then I did South of England representation in cross-country. And then I carried on and went to college and got A-Levels and when I was there ... Steve Benshaw was lecturing me at the time and gave me this subtle push, a shove more like! And that was it really I got into it then that was when I was 18 so five years ago. I haven't really looked back since then. I just built on it. I learnt to swim and bought a bike. I went down to a local triathlon club which was the Kings tri-club and they put me in lane 6 which was the beginners lane and they made a new lane for me after the first night - lane 7! Then I just improved at the swimming because I suppose I had the base of the running. ... Coach and Sid happened to be coaching just near the university so I went along there and they took me under their wing. Last year I had a motivation crisis because I just recently got selected for the worlds and went out to Mexico, and raced for Great Britain and when I got back I thought well that's my life long ambition achieved, what can I do now? and that's been it really. I got selected this year but can't afford to go, so I'm not going there now. ... this year it is the age group team so I would be competing against people in my age band 20-24. ... when I first started (Stan) was at Kingfisher triathlon as well. We were just friends and ... he happened to ring me up the day I came out of hospital with all my jaw wired up and proceeded to laugh at me and that was it, it went from there really. Then he was up in Avon already and had already set up the club. Yes, he set it up with Ben, ages ago in 1994, and I came up regularly and joined the club then as well.

Harriet grew up as part of a white, middle class, supportive family. Like many young girls the discourses of femininity channelled her into gymnastics, which is seen as a 'gender appropriate' sport (Lenskj 1986). In gymnastics the discourses of femininity, with a specific emphasis on slenderness construct 'elfin' bodies as the norm for girls (Hargreaves 1994). This fosters an obsession with body shape and weight from a young age. The discourse of performance drove Martha's sporting

activity from the age of 7. Harriet's undeveloped body was rigorously stretched, contorted and trained for nine hours a week for four years with either Harriet or her parents aware of the risks. The discourse of performance became dangerous when the outcome of such behaviour culminated a serious wrist injury by the age of 11. Harriet's injury produced a change of sporting direction, but no real lessons were learnt.

At 12 years old, Harriet started running and again she became successful very quickly and ran for her county, and for the South of England. She was once again pushed by dominant discourses: performance, competition and winning into more competitions over greater distances. In the discourse of science and medicine Harriet's body was trained as an isolated body, a functional, mechanical machine, which was constantly being tuned to go faster in order to win. The discourse of performance in the running club became dangerous when yet again Harriet's young body became dysfunctional and developed a serious injury this time to her knee. Harriet was first introduced to triathlon at university when she was swimming as part of her physiotherapy. Harriet's sporting histories show a distinct pattern. In each sport she takes up she gets to the top very quickly, then gets seriously injured, rethinks, then takes up another sport and repeats the cycle. When Harriet was growing up feminism was an everyday discourse. Her frequent changes in elite sport reflect that there was more variety in sport for women, not available to the older women in the club.

Harriet graduated from university and she moved down to live with her partner Stan who was a founding member of the club. The discourses of performance were very much a central part of her life as Harriet joined the club as an elite triathlete. To summarise, the discourses of performance dominated Harriet's early sporting experiences. The discourse of winning was the most dominant. Harriet's sole motivation to compete, and to train (in order to compete) was to win.

Jackie's story, scene one

... my dad treated me like that, (inferior, nothing) he is a pig and I am used to that type of person ... I am just used to be treated like that! ... when I was younger I was very bright and I was very sporty and I wanted to go to Oxford or Cambridge but my parents ... wouldn't let me do it (be a barrister)... and my mother didn't want me to go to Oxford because she thought that I would jump out of a window and kill myself because I wouldn't be able to cope with the social set-up because I

come from an ordinary family! ...she wanted me to become a bi-lingual secretary because then I would marry my boss and have lots of children. So really I didn't have a fighting chance did I ... my mother is still jealous of me and she didn't really want a daughter that was good at these things. ... I ended up not being a lawyer first time round because my parents came from that social background and its like a real uphill battle and now my parents think that I am really stuck up. I mean they care for me a lot but its tough for me because I am suddenly this stuck up lawyer who is better looking than her mother and had all these opportunities and all these sports and I am a spoilt brat who doesn't care about anything else. I don't know you go into life thinking that there is something wrong with you because you don't fit, I would have been better if I had had parents who had let me go to Oxford and let me do my sport I would have probably ended up with the sort of men that it took me until I was 43, because in the end I married somebody that I would have met there. You know it has all gone full circle with a lot of grief that didn't need to happen. ...My mother is horrified at my private life, always thought that I when I was younger, it would be to my detriment that I was sporty and academic, she thought that was the kiss of death for a girl. And I think that she has not really changed her mind that much! They came to see me in the London triathlon, that is the first time they have wanted to see anything that I had done. ... I think that they have finally learnt to accept my sport instead of trying to mould me into something else that society may think is more normal for a girl! (as my mother may perceive me!) After all these years my parents may have finally accepted that this is their daughter. I was performing very well at squash and then I got married and that all went wrong, and very nasty and then I got married again to somebody that hated me playing sport! He (2nd husband of 10 years) wanted to influence the way we spent our social lives ... he was very threatened because I was brighter than him ... I was a lot brighter, I was more successful in my career ... and he got very resentful. ... he didn't like me doing the sport ... he was very controlling ... he was bullying me and I was giving up being myself. I became more anxious about everything and then for the first time in my life I suffered a tremendous drop in my confidence, because it was as if I had lost my safety valve – sport has always been the way that I express myself ...I was about 13 stone in weight and I am only 5 ft 2 I had just become this person that I didn't recognise, ... I think that it was important really to get back a safety valve you know. I do a

stressful job, I am very sensitive and I get hurt by what people do ... I have tremendous drive to be good at things. ...to get me through (the marriage break up) the first thing I did was to play lots of squash and did lots of running, loads of running, because I found that to be quite therapeutic ... I know that when I joined the triathlon club I was very overweight, ... and so really it was to get rid of that weight. I am one of those people that I do have to be good at what I do, so I do not do things that I am not good at. ... I wanted to meet people who accepted women who liked sport, and that was important to me because in my marriage that had definitely not been the case, and I felt that was definitely part of my identity,

Jackie grew up as an only child in a working class family where the dominant discourse was patriarchy. Her childhood memories centre on her overpowering father and her emotionally unstable mother. Jackie feels that she still carries the scars from emotional and psychological abuse in her home experience. Jackie describes her father as “*a pig*” and infers his aggressive masculinity has influenced how she positions herself in gender power relations. She is implying there that the subject does not precede discourse, but is produced in it and through it (Fenstermaker and West 2002). The physical superiority of men she has known has involved violence against her as a woman in conjunction with a discourse of masculinity as superior to femininity. This is a critical linchpin in maintaining the unequal status of Jackie in her relationships. She has constantly felt “*a victim*”. Her experiences in gender power relations have been constructed as inferior because “*that’s always how men have treated me*”. McRobbie (2000) found that in her study of working class girls’ culture ‘in general the girls went along with their parents’ values’ (p. 59). It does not appear that Jackie wanted to, but for years, she allowed herself to be a docile body whose forces and energies were habituated to external regulation, subjection and normalisation (Bordo 1993). Jackie was good at sport at school and also academically bright, in direct contrast to her mother’s ideas. Jackie’s mother believed that to be sporty *and* academic was a fatal combination and “*the kiss of death for a girl*”. Her childhood is an example of how bodies begin to be culturally normalised from birth and materialised through what Butler (1993) describes as a ‘girling’ of girls (p. 9). Jackie’s social world materialised the athletic or academic women as negative and intimidating to men. Jackie’s experiences relate to Butler’s (1993) notion of gender performativity as she performed cultural practices that aligned with the discourses of femininity;

specifically domesticity and compulsive heterosexuality. But she also went against it, until violence forced her to succumb. Ultimately, however, she resisted the discourse of patriarchy and femininity as she left two husbands. Social class was clearly an issue for her family. Jackie's parents aligned both the subjectivities of a 'lawyer' and an 'athlete' with the discourse of masculinity and with an middle class status. Jackie's mother wanted a more 'feminine appropriate', working class identity for her daughter (married with children). The discourses of patriarchy, and femininity reinforced a threat that if Jackie pursued either a professional or athletic role, she would be deemed a failure, as she would never find a husband. And when she did, it may have justified her mother's fears. My findings concur with McRobbie (2000) with regard to gender, as her findings show that 'being working-class meant little or nothing to these girls – but being a *girl* over-determined their every moment' (p. 121). Jackie does not appear ashamed of the socio-economic group that she came from, but had an overwhelming desire to escape the limitations of gendered assumptions of dominant discourses which may have derived from a middle class education. The discourse of performance, also possibly derived from her education, has fuelled Jackie's desire to "*be good at things*". When Jackie says: "*I am one of those people that I do have to be good at what I do, so I do not do things that I am not good at*" she exhibits a fear of failure possibly related to her father's abusive attitude that always put her down and its contradictions with her scholastic and sporting success.

Jackie moved out of her working class culture when she got married and through her education. She married twice, and each time she found herself 'hiding in the shadows of men' (Bordo 1993, p. 106) through the experiences of abuse of asymmetrical power. Her first husband was physically abusive, and in the second marriage she was mentally abused. Jackie did not find the freedom that she was looking for by leaving home but initially just swapped one abusive patriarchal environment another. At the times in her life when she felt constrained to give up sport she felt that she had lost her "*safety valve*" and an important part of her subjectivity. After the second divorce Jackie immediately turned back to sport as she found it empowering and the crutch she needed to reinstate her sense of self.

To summarise, Jackie's early life was dominated by asymmetrical gender-power relations, which she felt have constricted her subjectivities. Her experiences of abuse through patriarchy have appeared to form her low expectations of herself as

a victim in personal relationships. Discourses of performance she derived from her education she applied to her career and eventually to her sport. Jackie describes sport as a safety valve and as an empowering experience. Triathlon and the club was where she found some freedom to be herself.

Claire's story, scene one

I am 15 now and originally I was a swimmer. I started swimming when I was 8, and then started to get competitive around the age of 12, 13, when I went to club, county and inter-county level on a couple of strokes. And then when I went to secondary school when I was 11, 12 ish I got into running, specifically cross-country. I started to do races for inter-school and county, round the country doing races, round our region and then at the Nationals so I had been to about four Nationals for my age group. And then dad said to me 'how about doing a duathlon?' – a swim, run. So I started doing, I did one up in ...up on the Thames, Kingston Upon Thames that was my first duathlon that was a 400 and a 5-km. I was ... 12, no 13, a couple of years ago. And then did another few duathlons, just small ones around our area, and then I decided to do a couple of races in the milk series (which is for children the ages 8 and 15). They weren't very long ones, just very short ones around the tracks and stuff. Then I did very well in them and so I thought well, I will do the 'U-series' which is a 750 swim, 20km bike 5km run. ... Last year I was 4th Nationals, 6th ranking in the series and this year I was 5th. My brother and sister are both swimmers, my sister gave up when she was about 10 (she is 18 now), but Tom's a really good swimmer, he got to the same levels as me, and dad's a runner and he cycles as well, he started to cycle before I started to cycle and that is how I mainly got into it. So that is how I got into it basically. ... I train with my dad ... But recently I have joined the Tri-Club, but they don't do much running because the runners tend to just go out on their own, they don't have specific nights, so I have joinedAthletics Club, which trains on a couple of nights a week as is only 25 minutes away from us, I will go over and do a set with them or something. And cycling, I am not sure what I am going to do about cycling yet, but I don't think that it is necessary until I start to get out on the roads in the summer.

Claire enjoys sport and comes from a supportive family. Like Martha she often gets called a tomboy (Hargreaves 1994) by others. The discourse of performance is mirrored in her story, which, although short, is littered with distances and times

which may be seen as a masculinised approach. Claire, her brother and sister were all club swimmers, which meant training at 6am every morning before school. By the age of 11 years old Claire was competing to county standard. At secondary school she became good at running and in a short space of time was competing in the National Championships. The discourse of performance has been dominant in Claire's life, supported by her father who, up until last year, was also her coach and training partner. As Claire's father was a keen cyclist and runner Claire was constantly pushing herself according to men's standards. Being an unqualified coach and a man, Claire's father may be relating to a discourse of no physical difference between the genders. As such, he may not be aware of the subtleties of training a young woman's body. Relationships between men coaches and sportswomen, or fathers and daughters can be analysed in terms of power and knowledge and the discourse of patriarchy (asymmetrical relations of power between men and women). The training practices may or may not be suitable for Claire, but, mainly due to her age, she may conform because of the trust she has in her father and the power of his authority. Alternately, she presents her story with herself in control and making her own choices. This is clearly empowering for her, but could be an example of how training can become a technology of domination and how physical activity disciplines Claire into a docile body who unquestioningly follow a discursive regime (Cole 1993, Markula 1995).

This may be claimed because Claire is still at school and is doing her GCSEs this year and feels under immense pressure from the discourse of performance to achieve good results in both her exams and triathlon. At only 15 years old, Claire has achieved highly in sport already, and both her and her new National Coach have great aspirations for her sporting future.

To summarise, Claire presents herself as a subject, a young sportswoman who is empowered through her physicality and feels in control of her own choices. The discourses of performance (attainment) are dominant in Claire's social world and her tough training regime has become a normalised way of life. At no time however, does Claire imply that her subjectivities in triathlon are anything but positive.

Trish's story, scene one

I think my husband was a big influence because I wasn't a sporty person until I married him, he was very sporty and he encouraged me to join him in running.

1980 I think it was, yes 1980! I was 26 approximately. I always liked swimming but breaststroke, I did breaststroke, so it took quite a long time to change over to freestyle. It is either 10 or 12 years ago, it was the Winchester triathlon the first we tried. Yes, because we haven't any children, so that makes it easier for us to do things like this. I suppose it (swimming) started off as an evening class and we went to the improvers session, and that was once a week so we have just been going to that for years and years... he (husband) introduced me to running and he was very good because I had never ever done running before, except the occasional cross-country at school and I used to go with my friend and ... we would run to her house, go into her house and have a cup of tea and then come out and pretend that we had done this long run! (Laughs) So I have changed quite a bit since then! And that was the only running I had done really and he started me off with little runs around the car park and then a little way down the road, and then a bit further,and now I have done 3 marathons! And I have also run the South Downs Way, all in one go and that is 80 miles in 24 hours. In triathlon? I have done an Olympic one, but it was one you did the sort of the swimming in the morning and then you had a bit of a rest, and then I think you did the cycling in the afternoon, and then the run was on Sunday morning, -that was right. It was like Saturday and Sunday, it was the Kingston one. And they spread it out all over weekend, that is the longest one I have done, and all the rest have been sprints. Did 6 last year, 2 very local, 2 in the New Forest and 2 in Malta. I like the cycle touring a lot I probably do more cycle touring, club rides with the touring club, but we are in a racing club also so I do get a chance to race. And in the summer of 97 I did the 'End to End' – Lands End to John O'Groats on my bike, but that was over 2 weeks. Partly a holiday, but it was averaging 72 miles a day for a fortnight and it was quite hilly so it wasn't quite! Actually my aim what I am aiming to do for this year s to do the Paris, Brest, Paris (PBP). It is what long –distance cyclists (well, not lots, some) long distance cyclists aspire to, because it is 12,000km without stopping. So it is about, it is a 90-hour limit, and you have just to keep pedalling and you just have to stop, and have some food and drink, or if you have time you can snatch a few hours of sleep. And you have to qualify by doing a 200km, 400km, no, a 200, 300, 400, 600 km in certain time limits. So that's really my goal this year rather than a particular triathlon, I really feel that the cycling thing is what I am really looking forward to try to qualify. Last year I did a 600km on my bike but

I was very close to the time limit on that, you get 40 hours on that and I just sort of squeezed in on the 40 hours, but I did get lost!

Trish came from a working class Catholic family with 7 children. She had negative experiences in school physical education and as a consequence gave up physical activity (Hall 1996). Trish only gave small fragments of her early home life which, since other interviewees talked about it, may indicate that she thought it uninteresting and not important. The discourse of performance was evident in Trish's life, however, as she qualified as a chemist and holds an influential position in the workplace. This may explain the technical discourse that runs through her story.

Trish starts her story at 26, a time that coincided with meeting her husband and being 'persuaded' (Barone 1995) to take up running. Her social world before, and after she met her husband, were strikingly different. From having no sport in her life, her sporting achievements over the last 10 years have been remarkable: 3 marathons, the South Downs Way, 6 triathlons, and multiple long distance cycling races. The discourse of performance that once only directed her career, has now fuelled her desires to achieve in her sport.

Trish presents her knowledges using the language of science and medicine. For example, she lists the names of the races, where they were, and then the exact distances and times she did them in. The language is very factual and technical which is aligned with a masculine narrative. Interestingly in her scientific style of writing she presents herself as an isolated body devoid of feeling and emotion. Trish is now obviously immersed in the discourse of performance and constantly sets herself tougher goals. If the goal is not faster then it's longer (longer distances or short distances sustained everyday for weeks at a time). During the interviews it was obvious how the discourse of performance empowers Trish and she describes how she feels alive when pursuing the discourses of attainment and hard work. The limitation to her achievement is not physical, but rather it is a time constraint. In the interviews she constantly talks about how she has to juggle the performance discourses of her career with the attainment discourses of triathlon that push her to train harder and longer.

Sharon's story, scene one

... when I was at junior school I did a lot of sports, swimming and running, and I started swimming when I was about 11, and I swam competitively until I was about

16, and then I started doing a lot of running because I had done like cross country running for school, and had got into the English team and stuff, and so if you are swimming when you are 16 and you haven't made it then, at that time it was the case that oh well you are never going to make it. ...I was really skinny when I was younger when I was swimmer, and then when I started running, running like track running, and long distance is full of really skinny girls and I think I got a couple of injuries ... I was at that age I was putting on a bit of weight. I had like 3 or 4 stress fractures in my legs in 3 years! ...I got GB Juniors, on the track and cross country. ...I went to university in England when I was 18 and then went to America on a running scholarship to an American university, and then I got quite injured, and then all from the age of 18 to about 22 I had had a lot of injuries from running, you know from running on the track, you get loads of overuse injuries, and so I probably spent 6 months of each year injured, and then trying to get fit, then racing really well, but you know always trying to get fit too quick. In the meantime I had always done, kept up my swimming a little bit just because whenever I got injured I always swam and you know, then I got injured I came back from the States and started to work in London, ... I just decided to keep fit and not to try to do anything, so I just ran a couple of times a week, and I swam actually with a triathlon club, and they then encouraged me to come out cycling like once a week on a Saturday, And then I just thought well if I am doing the training, and I was only doing it then to keep fit, and they said well why don't you start? And it really made sense, to do some events because I was doing the training and I was really enjoying it. So that was 7 years ago. And I just really loved it because the cross training felt so healthy, after being injured you know I could really keep trying and progressing and building up my training, but I hardly got any injuries compared to running, so I was able to start being competitive again and not worry you know whether I was going to get injured or not, I just thought that it was a very healthy kind of sport, and it just started from there really. Until more recently when I have started doing it full time, in the last couple of years.

We moved here ... three years ago, and we, you just get the booklet, we needed to join the local club to train with, so you get the BTA handbook and just rang up and started training for the club.

... in 1997 I was National Champion, and I got 15th in the European Champs and I won the European triathlon cup race at the end of the season. Um, and then last

year I started doing the World Cup circuit to try and qualify for the Olympics. And my best, I was 2nd in the Nationals, and then at the end of the season I came really good again and managed to get 3rd in a World Cup race out in New Zealand. And then this year so far I'm kind of top 10 in the World Cup Series for this year and just got 3rd for the European Champs. I got mine (elite licence) three years ago, when, because I just entered a couple of races and had done quite well in them, where there wasn't age groups and where there was just men and women, and so then I wanted to compete in an elite race and so I kind of applied for an elite licence. It is not selection (Olympics) until May next year, so if it were picked now I would go, but so much can happen, and everybody says 'you are going to go to the Olympics you know you are' but so much can happen, I could get injured, I could just be ill, ... two years ago ... I was encouraged by my coach and by people in the British Triathlon Association to start thinking about the Olympics because that's what it was decided that it was going to be in the Olympics, and it is really hard to train for triathlon once you compete at a certain level and you want to compete abroad because of the three disciplines and nearly all the girls I compete against in the European and the worlds are all full time athletes. So I was encouraged then to think about it seriously, well I went to the bank that I worked for and said 'well I don't know what to do, I want to keep my job because I don't want to put all my eggs in one basket, but I need to train a bit more, maybe I can work part time or whatever?' So, all through that winter, ... I worked part time – I worked about 30 hours a week, which was pretty part time because before that I had been doing about 60! Because it was in a bank in the City, and so it was pretty mad. And then what they did I said in the summer because I am racing abroad you know it may be better if I am not here at all because I will be in and out, and so we agreed that I would work over the busy period which is the winter, part time and then I would have the summer off. ... But they were very good and they helped to pay for a few of my trips, before I started to get sponsorship and funding, but then after last summer I realised that I really needed to train really hard in the winter, and go abroad you know to kind of get to the top level and to make the step up. And so I talked to them and we came to the conclusion that it was better that I didn't work. Fortunately around the same time we got Lottery funding (the triathlon) so I have got some kind of funding to help pay my way so I can pay my mortgage and things with the idea being that we did really badly in the Olympics

last time, any sports with anybody with the chance of doing well they are trying to encourage to do it full time and to do it properly. So I have been full time since really properly since last October, but I didn't work last summer either.

I have got a couple more races before the worlds, I have got one in Hungary in August and then I have got a two week training camp in the Alps, and then a race in Switzerland and then two weeks and then have got the World Champs.... then I have got a few races in the UK, I will probably do London and Brighton, just to make me, for the sponsors kind of, and then the last race is probably in Mexico in October, ... I have got a three week training camp in Bath, then South Africa training January, February, and the races in Australia and Japan, April and then races, ... I'll come back after January and train and then go to the Alps again for a while, and just, I like to do my camps but I also like to come home I can't, I don't want to be away from (husband) for that long and I think,its not going to be really hot in Sydney that time of year, so it is not going to be a problem with the weather acclimatising, but... you do get jet lag which takes about 5 or 6 days to get over properly for your body to be perfect, and it is really good to be in a routine leading up to a big race so if you are there long enough you can get into a good routine.

Sharon was active in sport as a child and consequently as Hargreaves (1994) suggests she was often nicknamed a tomboy for taking part in feminine inappropriate play (Lenskj 1986) such as climbing trees and rough and tumble with her brother. Sharon was a club swimmer in early childhood and she continued swimming competitively when she went to boarding school from the age of 11. The discourse of performance and the discourse of youth in swimming create a very intense period of training for young swimmers and those like Sharon who have not 'made it' by the age of 16 are labelled failures. The PE department at her boarding school got her involved in competitive running, an activity where she clearly showed ability. Her allegiance with the discourse of performance drove Sharon and her coaches to intensely train her body. She achieved national status when she was selected to be in the Great Britain Junior Squad.

Sharon's alternate knowledge of running suggest the kinds of people that are good at running are often quite obsessive characters, "*because in running generally the more you can do the better*". She describes herself like all the girls in her running group at school, as entrenched in the discourse of performance. The young

women were perfectionists, hard working and conscientious to the point of being obsessive. Sharon says she and her running peers felt they had to be the best at everything that they did. Sharon tells how the discourses of femininity, specifically the discourse of slenderness and body image, was also dominant in her experiences of running. She was very skinny until 16 when her body started to develop. Her story tells how she perceives running to be “*a real power to weight ratio thing*” and how she tried to control her weight by adopting various feminised cultural practices such as dieting. The discourses of femininity, paralleled with a discourse of attainment, were clearly dangerous at times in Sharon’s life because they were driving her into a pattern of ritualistic training and controlled eating and culminating in unhealthy outcomes such as repeated stress fractures. Sharon’s running curriculum vitae earned her an athletics scholarship at an American University. She tells how the discourse of patriarchy (a dominance of men coaches for women athletes) and the discourse of performance is even more intense in American culture (Blinde 1994) than in Britain, and rigorous training schedules resulted in Sharon being out of competition for 6 month periods with overuse injuries. Cultural practices often encouraged Sharon to cross the boundary from ‘sport is good for you’ to ‘sport is unhealthy’ for the woman’s body.

Sharon shows allegiance to a discourse of performance and high achievement in all aspects of her life. The most noticeable example was in her ‘normality’ of a 60-hour working week. In a period when Sharon was training hard, a negotiated a part-time contract still saw her working a 30 hour week which to most people would be almost a full time requirement. Her transition to triathlon was at a time when she was getting fit from a running overuse injury. In less than 7 years the discourse performance and her incredibly high attainment goals drove her to the top of triathlon and earned her a place on the Olympic Games Triathlon Team.

To summarise, the discourses of performance were dominant in Sharon’s story. The discourses of femininity (specifically the discourse of slenderness) and the discourse of attainment have clearly become dangerous in certain times in Sharon’s early life before she took up triathlon. She is clearly an empowered sportswoman who is constantly challenging the gender discourses. The discourse of hard work was at one point normalised as a 60-hour working week with a hard training schedule, and marriage fitted in on top. Sharon feels she is in control of her life and that she has freedom of choice. She demonstrated this when she

negotiated a new working week with her firm that would allow her more time for triathlon.

Tina's story, scene one

I suppose then it all stems from school days as I was always in all the teams for netball and hockey, rounders in the summer, tennis team, so quite a few sports, and I did quite a lot of swimming, I was a member of Splash ladies swimming club, from I do not know how old, but from very very young, about 10. And then from school, when I was doing my radiography training, I was always interested in running, and one of the guys in my year got me really interested in running, he was a runner and so we used to go running together, and then I joined Chasers running club, in London and ran with them, that was while I was a student. ... I did quite a lot of swimming when I got my first job ... I did my scuba diving course there, and I have always run since and I have progressed from short distances up to marathons. ... My mother has said things like "Oh, I don't know if you should do that dear! Oh no it is far too strenuous for a girl! ... No, and your anaemia, no, I don't think that you should do it!" But now she has just accepted it and I do not take any notice!

I did my first marathon ... about 11 years ago or something.... 22, or 23. And then I just carried on doing marathons and now I have done 8 so far, having joined several clubs, I have done 5 Londons, 1 Paris marathon, 1 Shakespeare marathon, (which is the worst marathon I have ever done in my entire life!) and the South Coast marathon. ... Because had done a lot of swimming, and because I had got into cycling, because my husband ... does a lot of cycling, I decided that triathlon would be quite a good idea. ... I did about three triathlons about three years ago and quite liked it and it was only really last year, having joined Deer cycling club and I met Stan and Harriet on one of our cycles and Stan said 'ooh, I gather you are interested in running and swimming why don't you come along to the triathlon club' so I said 'oh alright then I'll come' and that's it really that is where it stems from! Last October

Well we have just cycled from Geneva to Nice. Over the Alps, we actually went up the highest surface road in Europe! Which is the Col du la Bonnet, which is 2,802m above sea level, which was a little steep! Not many other cyclists up there I have to say! Not many girl cyclists around at all! Which was quite nice because they are treated like a novelty, - 'oh, there is a woman on a bike, that's strange,

lets go and talk to her!’ So there was a lot of French people coming up to us and asking us about our bikes. But it is wonderful, cycling in the mountains, we have done it three years running now, for two weeks at about this time of year and it is just so quiet and peaceful and the scenery is just spectacular! And you come back with legs like tree trunks! (Laughs)

I won the club duathlon ... I am in the veterans! ... it was at the prize giving and - ----- said ‘I think you have won a prize’ and I said ‘don’t be so stupid I can’t possibly have won a prize, I was really slow in the pool’ and she said ‘No, I think that you have, you have’ ‘no, I can’t have won’ anyway -----announced the prizes and said ‘And the winner of the veteran ladies is Tina!’ And I thought Veteran! Veteran? I can’t be a veteran!

The discourse of performance was evident in Tina’s early years as she swam competitively from the age of 10. She got into running at school and it became a sport that she has pursued most of her life. She was from a middle-class supportive family but her parents were not physically active. Tina’s mother constantly tried to ‘girl’ Tina’s body (Butler 1993, p. 9). Tina told how her mother tried to constrain her through discourses of femininity that materialised her body as weak and fragile. Sport was seen as a way for Tina to resist the dominant discourses of femininity. Tina presents her story through a masculine narrative including a lot of times and distances. This may be because she is entrenched in the discourse of performance and attainment where she is constantly setting herself new goals. Her physical curriculum vitae is impressive as Tina has completed 8 marathons. Her physical practices (for example, the long distance cycle up the Alps) are constantly testing herself and are viewed by onlookers as challenging the discourses of femininity. At a time when Tina was competing in marathons, the discourses of performance were becoming dangerous. Tina was maintaining her subjectivity as a marathon runner with training practices that were constructing a negative outcome on her health. Tina’s periods stopped, she kept passing out, and she was severely anaemic. She was advised to give up the long distance running. In her mid 20s Tina turned instead to triathlon.

To summarise, Tina’s mother supported the discourses of femininity and constantly tried to constrain Tina’s body. Tina resisted the discourses of femininity through sport, and was constantly challenging gendered assumptions of women’s physicality by pushing her body harder, longer and higher. Tina’s story tells how

as subject, she positioned herself in the discourses of performance and often felt empowered through the discourse of attainment. Discourses of performance did become dangerous when Tina's health deteriorated.

Paula's story, scene one

I am mainly a lacrosse player; I play lacrosse, for twenty odd years! I suppose that is my best sport I managed to get up to Eastern England standard, county standard. How did I get into triathlon? I played lots of sports, I played football, mainly teaching sports like hockey, squash, everything really, that is what I spent most of my life at university doing. And then I finally got into triathlon a few years ago mainly trying to get me a bit fitter for lacrosse. Because I did not use to do anything in the summer I was just finding it a real struggle in September to get fit, so it was something to aim towards and to do in the summer months. I needed a bit of motivation really. Triathlon? Um, I've done three races in three years, I did one that I had not really trained for I just decided to do it because I watched ... I think I watched the London triathlon on TV about three years ago or something and thought Oh, I'll give that a go. I was really really unfit but I had a go, and came second from last I think, Yes, I did only one race that year, and the second year I was injury prone and so I did not do my second one until August ... through lacrosse. Yes it took 8 months before I could even run so all I could do was the swimming. I did the London triathlon in August, the first time I had really run, I was quite pleased to get that one out of the way, and then only another one that season and that was it. This year is the big one – hopefully! (Laughs). It was the cross training. I have never been particularly good at any one of these sports, but everyone looked really really fit, and I thought it was just a mad distance (it is only Olympic distance) but I thought it was mad! I thought definitely for something to aim for it would be really good motivation to try and get out there, Sandy sometimes made comments about how many weekends that I played lacrosse, triathlon tends to make our relationship better, as we have done triathlon together it is something that we can share otherwise we won't see each other. ... we tend to swim together, and sometimes go running but Sandy is a far better runner than me but she will sometimes come out with me and double back! (Laughs). I find triathlon very difficult psychologically, I am used to playing team sports, I find it really really hard to push myself, whereas in a team you are doing it because ... I have been doing that for so many years that it has become a mind set, I find myself

doing triathlons and I find myself dawdling on the bike! Looking around me (laughs) rather than concentrating on actually killing myself in order to get back for the run! Hopefully triathlon will get easier eventually! In triathlon I want to do an Olympic distance. Go and emigrate to Australia. Work part time. And play lacrosse for two more years.

Paula's story told how she participated in a number of sports as a child and was a key player in the school sports teams. Her middle-class family background enabled her to go to university. The discourse of performance dominated her sporting experiences at university. Paula attained a place the National squad for Lacrosse and also competed in other team sports, such as football. Paula resisted the discourses of femininity, which normalises heterosexuality, and started dating her partner Sandy at university. Paula has been out about her sexuality for over 25 years and is very comfortable with her alternate knowledges and truths about sexuality. She was involved with sport long before she knew she was gay (Clarke 2002). Paula talks briefly later about how she manages her lesbian subjectivity and talks about how she is proud of resisting dominant discourses of heterosexuality. Paula's maintained subjectivity of being a lesbian sportswoman equips her with alternate discourses, knowledges and truths about relationships and realigns power relations in family life. In Paula and Sandy's home life relations of power are *between* women. Paula only took up triathlon at 33 years old, as a way of spending more time with Sandy.

To summarise, Paula became enmeshed in the discourses of performance as a young adult, where at university she positioned herself in competitive lacrosse, football and other masculinised sports. She rejected the discourses of femininity and specifically the discourse of compulsory heterosexuality when she met Sandy. She feels empowered by challenging gender assumptions and her alternate knowledge and truths. Paula feels that she is free to make her own choices of how she lives her life and her subjectivities.

Sandy's story, scene one

I was always sporty at school. I have a running background I started running at University in 1983, stopped and started over the years, stopped before I started doing triathlon, and then started running 18 months ago, probably about a year ago I got a hip injury, put on weight, as a result of the injury, couldn't run, so I began swimming instead, thought I would try a triathlon. Paula (my partner) did

one and I thought that they were a little crap! And then because I couldn't run, and I got into swimming, I thought that maybe I would just try one, so I just tried one because I got injured running, that's it really, then I was hooked. I did not do much at school, I suppose, maybe a little bit, it was more when I hit 20 21 that I started doing sport, but it has literally gone in stops and starts, as I ran at university and then I started nursing, and I couldn't fit it in around shift work, smoked and drank like everyone does, so became a real slob! And then when I went to 9-5 job, 4, 5 years ago, and had regular hours that I could actually plan, I started running again then so there are 'gaps' when I haven't been doing it over the years. ... this is my second full season last year all I really did was all the sprints and lots of novice races and I did one full Olympic by the end of the season, so I thought just on the back of that to actually to train properly this year, there is a little more structure to it this year, a lot more structure to it now than if I had just been running to try to get the three disciplines in. So I am learning the ropes really, but I am not particularly brilliant in working out when I should do an 'intense week' and when I should back off and not do very much which is why I think that I get to a certain point and then stop for three days, because I am 'knackered!' ... I did my first triathlon and I thought 'yes I sort of like this, this is fun' carried on swimming at the gym, and getting nowhere fast, but Paula was actually quite good as she said 'I wouldn't go yet until you feel a bit more confident. ... I started swimming in the March and did not actually go to the club until the August or September

The discourse of performance was evident in Sandy's early life, however, it was not channelled into sport but rather manifested itself in conscientious behaviour and academic attainment at school and later in the workplace. Sandy tells how sport has featured in her life very intermittently and there are periods of her life that she describes when she just *"ate and smoked ... put on weight and became a real slob!"* At school, she was not interested in physical activity at all. She first became attracted to sporting culture at university at the age of 20-21, where she met Paula and realised that she was gay. Sandy took up competitive running and after many running related injuries she turned to swimming. Sandy joined the club a few years ago. She talks about the way she now likes to feel fit and she sees herself as 'sporty spice' a subjectivity she aligns with *"the gay subculture"*. Sandy's maintained subjectivity of being a lesbian sportswoman equips her with alternate discourses, knowledges and truths about relationships and realigns power

relations in family life. In Sandy's home life relations of power are *between* women.

To summarise, Sandy's story tells how the discourses of performance came in and out of focus in her early life and how it was not until she got to university that Sandy positioned herself in the discourse of attainment, both academically and in running. Sandy rejected the discourse of heterosexual femininity and instead reinscribed herself in the alternate discourse of women's homosexuality.

Coach's story, scene one

I started off as a competitive swimmer that is in about age 7, and then competitively swam until I was about 18 ... National standard. ...I had tonsillitis for about 18 months continuously and I was not able to swim as regularly, once you are at that sort of standard and you have not swum for a while you tend to veg, so I started coaching, teaching and coaching as soon as I was 17. I started taking all my teaching and coaching exams, and went straight through the system with those, and then coached at various swimming clubs until I was early 20s and then I stopped for a while because of other commitments and things, um, and then my brother (who was an international swimmer) after an accident decided to take up triathlon and asked me if I would start coaching. So I started at ----- in 1984 and triathlon had only just started in this country then taking the club from a membership of 6 to 30 in six months and then 100 in the first year. And I stayed there coaching until the early 90s when I started competing myself and got involved in tutoring and coaching at the National squad. So that's basically my history and then from then on I continued to coach, don't do any coaching with the National squad, the only coaching I do is here ... and run various coaching clinics. I started coaching and teaching full time, and then took on a handful of personal athletes ... we are winding that down now, as our careers are just not allowing us to give the time we had before. So we have got about 15 athletes now that we coach on a sort of personal level, as well as the clubs.

I have not competed since, well this is the 4th year that I haven't raced. I started racing in 89 through to about 93, then I did not race at all I just concentrated on the coaching, um, like doing like one race a year, I haven't done anything for the last 4 years but I hope to try and get back into it this year.

Coach did not elaborate on her family histories except for categorising it as white and middle-class. She did describe how she was swimming competitively from the

age of 7 years old and how her life was entrenched in the discourse of performance. She experienced a gruelling lifestyle and the arduous training regimes of a club and national squad swimmer for 11 more years. The discourse of performance became dangerous for Coach. Overtraining manifested itself in continuous bouts of illness. At 18 years old these negative outcomes made her redirect her sporting interests into coaching. The discourse of performance was still dominant and drove her to be the top in triathlon coaching despite the discourses of femininity trying to constrain her. She first qualified as a swimming coach and then two years later turned to triathlon both as a competitor and as a coach. She later became a National Coach to the Great Britain Squad. She describes how triathlon permeates most parts of her life. She mixes with friends that are in triathlon, she married a fellow coach, and they train together. Her first job is in swimming and her part time job is coaching club and individual triathletes.

To summarise, Coach's early years in sport were dominated by the discourse of performance. These became dangerous as Coach became ill from what she believes was overtraining. As Coach became qualified to coach other athletes she tells how the discourse of achievement remained dominant in her life as it drove her to reach the top in British Triathlon coaching. The discourses of performance also manifested itself in the performance-based attitudes she perpetuated in her athletes (for example Harriet).

Louise's story, scene one

...my dad runs marathons and my uncle was an Olympic silver medallist in the marathon, so there is that sporty side to the family, that I just don't share the same chromosomes with! So then I was watching that and I picked my dad up from the marathon, and I knew that I would never ever do anything like that because that was just completely dull ... I do not have a sporting background at all! The last time I did any type of exercise was at I suppose secondary school, first year secondary school, and that was just running and things like that and I was quite OK at that point and I could run quite fast and I could jump quite long and I did just did normal averagy of sporty type things I could throw the javelin quite well and then I got into sex, drugs and rock and roll and it all went horribly wrong! From then in really (Laughs). In the end I would much rather go out and have a Pernod than go out and train. So that all stopped, and I actively avoided all forms of sport at all, and then I have dabbled a bit with step over the years I would go

through phases, and then that was it I did nothing just laid on the couch and flicked the remote control. Until one Sunday morning I woke up and thought 'Umm, would like to do a Triathlon!' But, I can't swim, and I don't have a pair of running shoes and I haven't ridden a bike since I was 12! And that is really what happened and I had to get in contact with the club and then start off from scratch. I had a couple of really bad kids (still have) and they are just completely draining and you get home and you would be completely pent up from what they have said and you were frustrated from what they are doing, or not doing and you are angry, and I would just sit down and drink, I would get a drink, (I sound like an alcoholic!) I sit down and get a drink and then I would sit down and eat something, and then I would get a drink and then Fred would come home, and it was only when talking to him that I actually released all this energy and all this angst, and then it would start again everyday. So that was going on all the time and I was thinking this is plain ridiculous! This can't go on, and then I picked up a magazine and there was an article in the back of that on triathlon, sprint triathlon, and I just read it and thought 'Oh my god! Ok, sounds Ok, bit you must be mad to do it!' And then there was this London Marathon was on at the same time and I knew then, my dad runs marathons and my uncle was an Olympic silver medallist in the marathon, so there is that sporty side to the family, that I just don't share the same chromosomes with them! ... So there was all that going on really and it just all culminated with this Sunday morning reading and thinking 'yes, I am going to do a triathlon!' And I think that if I hadn't got on the Internet and I hadn't found a club and phoned up somebody, and there wasn't completely that logical process, if I couldn't sort it out, there and then I would have never have done it! I think at the time it could have been anything but it was a magazine article and it was about somebody that had never done one before, and she just broke it down so you know it is so many laps of the swimming pool and it is so many miles on the bike, and a three mile run and I thought, actually individually they are all 'doable'. Ok, I can't swim! But if you could swim, that is doable. Riding a bike, well you just ride a bike don't you! (I thought!) And run, Ok three miles is doable. There is nothing excessive, there is nothing like 26 miles of slogging your guts out! And it is always bite size little chunks. ...I think that because I am the type of person that if it is easy to do, well not easy to do, if you can do it instantly, if you get instant gratification then that will keep me hooked.

I started learning how to swim, ... I had my first swimming lesson on the 30 something of April, almost on the last day of April, and then I would say, well the first thing that I did competitively was the Mid Summer Duathlon on the 21st of June of that year!

Louise grew up in a supportive middle-class family. Louise's story was different from most other women in the study as, despite her father and uncle both being marathon runners (her uncle to Olympic standard), she was very anti-sport as a child and throughout her early adult life. This was due to a negative experience of what she describes as "*a PE teacher from hell!*" Hall (1996) argues that a negative teacher is a common reason for women to 'be turned off from sport' (p. 8). The discourse of performance clearly dominated Louise's life as she was very career driven and became a deputy head of a school at 26 years old. She describes herself as very attainment orientated and how she is prepared to do whatever it takes to get to the top, which at times, was infuriating:

I jumped through this hoop two years ago, and 6 months after I had jumped through the bloody hoop you told me it was the wrong hoop to jump through and you have given me another hoop to jump through!

This part of her story may illustrate however, that although Louise did not participate in competitive sport before joining the club, she does exhibit a very competitive side to her character through work-based practices. Louise turned to triathlon at a time of work-based stress, and when she first decided that triathlon was the sport she was going to do she could not even swim. Louise learnt to swim at a local pool and after 6 months contacted the triathlon club.

To summarise, Louise has been entrenched in discourses of performance (attainment) throughout her adult life. Until recently, the discourse of attainment only pushed Louise to excel in the workplace. Louise took up triathlon and suddenly work faded out of focus and instead she pushed herself into gruelling training programmes in order to achieve her goal of competing. This suggests that triathlon became Louise's freedom from the constraints of work.

Betty's story, scene one

I started taking part in sport when I was 7 years old, re the junior school netball team etc. and sports days that kind of thing. I took it to a higher level when I got to secondary school. I started playing hockey and netball for the school teams and

went on to play for the county team. I ran cross-country for the school team and also ran for the county team. I also did the athletics in the summer seasons. I started off doing the 800m runs and 400m runs and then cut it down to hurdles, long jump and 100m sprint. I did that and at county level until I was about 15, when I discovered a boyfriend and he took over! I basically did not do very much sport after that, intensive period of training 4 or 5 times a week for a club as well as the school activities, until I was 21 and started going to a gym again. Through my job got involved with triathlon. As far as knowledge of the actual triathlon is concerned, I have a vast knowledge with regards the organisation of it, training and how sports people, professional sports people train and how they live. Me personally, in terms of my abilities as a triathlete I would say that I was a beginner, a novice. Probably novice because due to the fact I have so much background knowledge of the sport rather than in my own experiences in taking part in a lot. So far I have done 4, one in Lanzarote, and three, oh, no 5. Three in Australia and one in London which was last September and three years beforehand, and the reason I don't want to do very many is that I get too nervous! ... I used to do so much sport at school, my friends at home have actually grown up with me doing sport. ... I suppose that when you make the transition back to the friends you have from the pub, they think that you must be mad, and you have trained loads when you don't actually think that you are doing much. I will train because I like training and I will train to my best because I like doing it. When you are on a bike you make yourself go faster, you make yourself go higher up the hill because you like the feeling. You just like training.

Betty did not include any childhood experiences in the first scene of her own story, which will make sense, when the rest of her story unfolds. She has transformed herself so far removed from the old self that she has consciously blotted out her past and obviously does not think her early life has any significance to her new. I include her background story from our many other dialogues.

Betty grew up in a small village in the Welsh valleys. Betty's Welsh working-class background reflects strongly in her story. She has a close-knit supportive family and is the only daughter with four brothers. She describes her father as an overpowering patriarchal man and how her mother hid in his shadow (Bordo 1993). Gender-power relations in Betty's childhood household were very asymmetrical and at some point Betty hinted that there was a personal abuse of

power (Brackenridge 2002). Betty's story has some familiarity with McRobbie's (2000) findings as she tells with some self-importance how cooking and managing the house were her and her mother's responsibility. It accounted for the resigned but semi-indulgent way she complained about her brothers (but never her father). Gendered assumptions surrounding household chores formed a special closeness between Betty and her mother. A body becomes gendered through the incessant performance of femininity and performativity is a process by which discourse produces the effects that it names (Butler 1993).

Betty did athletics for the school and was running cross-country by the age of 12. She too experienced 'tomboyism' (Hall 1996, p.15) because she spent a lot of time playing with her brothers and doing sport. Women in Betty's community were expected to get married and settle down in the neighbourhood. A feminist critique of Betty's story shows how she is desperate to break out of this insular way of life. She tells of several practices she employed to resist her childhood roots. At 18 she went around the world for a year travelling, at 20 she worked abroad for a couple of years, and at 27 she moved to and worked in Australia for 10 months. These practices could be seen as resistance as freedom (Foucault 1978/1976). She describes however, how she could not bear to be away from her mother for long and how she had a love hate relationship with her Welsh roots. When she was away she was homesick and when she was at home she felt smothered by the expected cultural practices of womanhood. From hearing how at 22 Betty took up triathlon and became submerged in the triathlon scene, I suggest that triathlon acted as Betty's resistance as freedom (Foucault (1979/1976) from the dominant discourses (patriarchy, womanhood, femininity) she experienced as a child.

To summarise, Betty rejected the discourses of femininity (specifically domesticity) that were constraining her early life. She shows how the discourses of performance (competition and winning) were dominant in her childhood experiences of sport. Discourses of attainment through training became stronger than discourses of winning for Betty in later life, as it was through training, rather than racing, that she maintained her desired subjectivities in triathlon. She used triathlon as resistance for freedom as she feels that in triathlon culture she is a strong independent woman who is free to make her own choices in life.

Deirdre's story, scene one

I think this all hinges on the sort of insecurity, the need for an identity for recognition and the security that that can offer, and the absence of that other wise in one's life. And certainly in my case, I trace it back to my childhood and what I regard as particularly from my father a sort of essential rejection of who I was, of the character I was and that I wasn't the daughter that he hoped I would be and I that I think left a very big impression on me....I was a swot at school, I wore glasses ... and if you add to that a situations at home ... of great insecurity and uncertainty because of my father's mental illness. ... I didn't have any control over the situation I was living in and that left me very scared of being out of control of anything, and so being out of control of my life. ... He essentially wanted me to be glamorous, slim, a woman whose basic priority would be marrying someone successful and bringing up a family. ...I just wanted to run and train it was something that was mine, I felt strong when I was exercising, I felt in control...

The dominant discourses in Deirdre's childhood were the discourses of performance, the discourse of patriarchy, the discourse of illness (her father's mental illness) and the discourses of femininity. Deirdre was constantly trying to seek her father's approval and his praise (*to feel special*) but he was instead always highly critical of her as a woman. Her self-esteem was low (she never felt 'special' in his eyes) and instead the discourses her father perpetuated (the men's standard, the discourse of attractiveness) in turn arguably manifested themselves in highly driven patterns of behaviour both at school, in training and at work. As she explains later, a personal best is only a fleeting achievement of 'best', there is always faster. Deirdre likes the image of being "wacky or crazy" and it was as if through triathlon she was reliving the childhood that she never had. Deirdre's 'boyish' look reflects the 'Peter Pan' image and links triathlon to Deirdre's desire to "keep/be young". Her father particularly hated the fact that she did not look 'pretty' and did not conform to the discourse of attractiveness. She said that as a child she consciously created herself through the "tomboy image" as it was a way of rebelling against the dominant discourses of femininity which were constraining her.

To summarise, Deirdre's whole life, not just her sport, has been dominated by discourses of performance (at home, at work and in triathlon). Deirdre identifies performance discourses as discourses of attainment (faster, longer, higher goals),

competitive (sustained personal bests, comparison to others), personal goals more than the norm (to be the best, no room for criticism). She articulates how she has been both constrained *and* empowered by maintaining her subjectivities in triathlon and work to the extreme.

Scene one, the collective stories

From the women's stories individual stories it is possible to also note similarities in what they say. As Foucault (1978/1976) contends, history and culture play crucial roles in the creation of power relations. Applying this to gender-power relations, the similarities in the women's age seemed important to me. One reason was because it aligned their lives with what was happening in feminist theory. Jackie and Trish are the oldest, both now over 40. They were primary age children in the early 1960s when class oppression and sexual oppression were the two major systems of power. Both women described their backgrounds as "*working class*". Jackie and Trish's childhood experiences mirror to some extent McRobbie's (2000) findings on working class girls in the 1970s. Both Jackie and Trish were discouraged to be active in their early years due to discourses of femininity which aligned their roles as young women with domesticity. The intellectual and political framework for liberal feminism emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Jackie and Trish were both about 12 when the *Equal Pay Act* of 1970 gave women equal rights in the workplace. Jackie talks about her desire to be more involved in sport at secondary school, however, the dominant discourses in her home life remained firmly entrenched. In 1999 at the time of my interviews, Coach, Martha, Paula, Sandy, Trish, Betty, Sharon and Deirdre were all in their early, to mid 30s. This would make them 10 years-old between 1974 and 1979. In the 1970s and 1980s sport became more politicised (Hargreaves 1994); for example, in 1972 Title IX in the USA was intended to abolish discrimination in educational sport. Coach, Martha, Paula, Sandy, Betty, Sharon and Deirdre's adolescent years were after the women's movement and anti-sexist legislation. They were young women at a time where knowledges and truths, and gender-power relations were constantly being challenged in the press and gradually in education and everyday life. A similarity in Martha, Deirdre, Sharon, Harriet, Coach and Claire's early sporting experiences, reflected how successful these children became in a short space of time. Sharon, Harriet and Deirdre were perfectionists who pushed themselves to always do 'more than the norm'. Trish,

Louise and Sandy however, had negative experiences of PE in school and as a consequence did not take up physical activity again until adulthood (Hall 1996). Except for Trish, Louise and Sandy, all the other women told stories of enduring 'tomboyism' (Hall 1996) because of their 'feminine inappropriate' (Lanskyj 1986) play activities and often short hair. All women (except Jackie) had loving, supportive families. Gender-power relations in the women's childhood homes were diverse. Jackie, Martha and Betty's dialogues of working-class families, however, show how patriarchy and the discourses of femininity channelled girl's bodies into gender performativity (Butler 1993). As working class girls, their subjectivities were constructed and constrained by discourses associated with their embodied social practices in the context of patriarchal gender-power relations. As Foucault (1978/1976) argues where there is power there is resistance. The gendered division of labour in the home was evident, with power positioned in relation to men, but at least some of these women may have related more to masculine practices, as they were being constructed in their feminine womanhood. Martha and Betty were able to combine their construction of their femininity with resistances towards masculine appropriate activities such as sporting activities. They became practices devised to transcend these dominant discourses which were examples of resistance as freedom (Foucault 1978/1976).

Harriet and Claire were in mid-childhood when everyday feminism was an established discourse. Poststructural feminism argues for multiple femininities and masculinities. Harriet and Claire's stories reflect how, as young women subjects, they had agency and were active in forming their individual subjectivities. Harriet and Claire were actively encouraged into sport by their parents, which suggests that being a sportswoman at the end of the twentieth century was a valued subjectivity for a woman. Harriet, Claire, Sharon and Deirdre were the youngest women and the ones that exhibited notable competitive attitudes from childhood. Their stories suggests they grew up in and are perpetuating the discourses of performance entrenched in contemporary sport. In current society there are more opportunities for women who want to compete, however, as the stories show the discourses of performance materialise the girls'/womens' bodies (Butler 1993) in different ways. The data showed how the discourse of performance constructed outcomes that lie on a continuum. At one end, many of the young women were empowered through their participation in physical activity (Claire, Sharon,

Martha). At different times in, and spaces of their lives, all the women constructed alternate knowledges and truths and became active in the negotiation of discursive practices, challenging, and often using the power invested in their bodies as resistance as freedom (Martha) (Foucault 1978/1976). At the other end of the spectrum, the stories showed how the discourse of performance became 'dangerous'. The pressure to succeed was manifested in the overtraining of young bodies that in turn resulted in serious injuries (Harriet, Sharon).

The collective first scene reflects how, in all of the stories I could see evidence to suggest that at some time in their lives, triathlon practices acted as the women's resistance as freedom (Foucault 1978/1976). Out of all the women, Claire seemed to be the most free to choose from what now is endless opportunity of what she wants to do in her life. Maybe this is because she is so young and still in the care of her parents. At no point in her story however, did she give any suggestion that she felt constrained with the cultural practices that maintain her subjectivities.

Triathlon could be included in Wheaton and Tomlinson's (1998) description of 'new sports' which are packaged and perceived 'for the cool, by the cool ...' (Roberts 1999, p. 7). I wanted to understand how women negotiate and experience such image-based subjectivities. I start by analysing what attracted each woman to the sport of triathlon.

Why triathlon? What are the discourses that the women recognise in triathlon?

This first section of the women's stories did highlight some similarities. For example, Jackie, Louise, Paula and Martha's reason for starting triathlon related to discourses of the body and physical fitness. They perceived the body in triathlon to be a fit body. As Martha states:

I think that it has got a good image, I don't know whether it is just in the sporting world, but you have got an image of being extremely fit if you do triathlons

Deirdre specifically linked triathlon with the discourse of health. She said:

I wanted to be regarded as someone who 'is healthy' who has 'a healthy lifestyle'

Paula said that she was drawn to the cross training aspect of triathlon. She thought that doing three events, each with different physical demands would improve her

fitness level for her main sport of lacrosse because, as she admits she gets bored easily when training:

I finally got into triathlon a few years ago mainly through trying to get me a bit fitter for lacrosse.... it was the cross training because I get bored very easily. I suppose my lacrosse training has always been centred around on just playing, or just playing other sports around it to keep my general level of fitness so I don't think I have ever just trained really....

Tina and Jackie, however, were attracted to the image of triathlon and perceived triathletes to have certain kinds of personalities. As Tina explains: “*triathletes are fun loving people, who get a buzz from doing mad things like triathlons*”. For Jackie too the image of a triathlete conjured up a particular type of personality:

... the sort of people who thought that life is too short that you've got to have a go for as long as possible! And I thought that triathletes would be like that ...

Both images of behaving in a ‘mad’ and ‘fun loving’ way with the ethos of ‘life is too short’ are often symbolic discourses of being young, and therefore, an attraction of triathlon may be the ‘Peter Pan’ image and discourse of youth.

Existing research suggest that ‘subcultures’ are created out of, and are marked by, style (Donnelly 1993, Muggleton 2002). Betty, was very attracted to the discourse of style in triathlon or what she describes as the *glamorous, outdoors, young, trendy image*. As she says:

Through my job I got involved with triathlon ... and got hooked! Hooked with the scene, hooked with the training the whole scenario, the people are good fun, it is a good sport to be involved with.

As I discuss later, my data found that participation in the lifestyle of triathlon is communicated through a range of symbols such as clothes, equipment and fashion. Betty was attracted to, and desperately wanted to maintain personal habitus in triathlon culture which as I will discuss later, she achieved through: her job (event organiser for triathlon); triathlon practices (rigorous training); where she lived (areas of renown triathlon culture); and who she mixed with (triathlon friends).

The commonality between Harriet, Paula, Tina and Deirdre and Sharon’s attraction to triathlon was a discourse of health. Each of these women perceived triathlon to be “*a healthy sport*”. A healthy image could refer to a combination of fitness and youth discourses. All four women were from competitive running

backgrounds where the discourse of performance in each woman's life had become *dangerous* and their arduous sporting practices had resulted in repetitive and serious injuries at a young age. The discourse of health attracted these women to triathlon to also recuperate from injuries. My data found that when the runners were injured they often swam to recover. It was at the pool that Sharon, Harriet, Tina and Sandy were first introduced to triathlon. Harriet said:

I got injured from running, a bad knee injury probably from running too much too soon. One of my lecturers there said why don't you take up swimming and cycling to keep you fit? So I said 'all right alright' and as soon as my leg got better he shoved an entry form into my hand and said 'here's a triathlon to do'. And so I just fell into it that way

Tina's health also suffered too through long distance running. She says:

And how I got into triathlon is that I wanted a change from doing all that running training, and I found that I was getting very anaemic, my haemoglobin kept going way down and I kept feeling really awful just absolutely drained all of the time, and I really thought that was it, that I couldn't feel really awful all of the time, even though I was crunching down iron tablets like there was no tomorrow, it was exhausting really

Sharon told of her negative experiences of being at an American University on a running scholarship:

I got quite injured, and then from the age of 18 to about 22 I had had a lot of injuries from running, you know from running on the track, you get loads of overuse injuries, and so I probably spent 6 months of each year injured, and then trying to get fit, then racing really well, but you know always trying to get fit too quick. In the meantime I had always ... kept up my swimming a little bit just because whenever I got injured I always swam. I got injured I came back from the States and started to work in London, and I just decided to keep fit and not to try to do anything, so I just ran a couple of times a week, and I swam actually with a triathlon club, and they then encouraged me to come out cycling like once a week on a Saturday. ... I was only doing it then to keep fit, and they said 'well why don't you start? I just really loved it because the cross training felt so healthy, after being injured. I hardly got any injuries compared to running, so I was able to start being competitive again and not worry you know whether I was going to get injured or not, I just thought that it was a very healthy kind of sport

Sandy told a similar story:

...started running 18 months ago, probably about a year ago I got a hip injury, put on weight, as a result of the injury, couldn't run, so I began swimming instead, thought I would try a triathlon ... Paula did one and I thought that they were a little crap! And then because I couldn't run, and I got into swimming, I thought that maybe I would just try one, so I just tried one because I got injured running, that's it really, then I was hooked.

The discourse of risk was evident in all four women's scenarios. Harriet and Sharon both describe injury as a common occurrence in their young lives. Whilst at University in America (USA), for as long as 6 months of each year Sharon was rehabilitating from overuse running injuries incurred from following gruelling training regimes (Sherlock and Swaine 1995). It could be argued that running was an intermittent technology of domination for Sharon, as it anchored her into a discursive web of normalising practices (Cole 1993). An alternate view saw that Sharon experienced her USA training practices as freedom. The discourse of patriarchy (by all men coaches) and institutionalised power (she was a full scholarship student) sacrificed Sharon's 'long term health in favour of short-term competitive goals' (Blinde 1994, p. 140). Blinde (1994) argues physical exploitation of women athletes relates to training techniques and the handling of injuries.

Martha was a runner, however, she was also a nurse, and consequently she made a conscious decision to take up triathlon *before* she got injured to *minimalise* the risk of sports injuries. She says for her the attraction of triathlon was:

definitely the cross-training, I had seen it on television, but I had not seen it advertised locally, no, a couple of girls from the running club had done triathlon, so it had been in the conversation, but it wasn't they who spurred me it was more the risk of injury that spurred me into the cross training, that spurred me into triathlons.

Coach echoed Martha's comments, but said it was the excitement and the variety of the three events that attracted her to triathlon:

It is so varied, it is hard to get bored on because you are working at all the different disciplines. You get a really good work out and no matter what you are doing, it keeps you fit. Fantastic camaraderie between the athletes no matter what standard right through from novice right through to elite and I think that that is the only ever sport that I have ever come across it in ... my career, where everybody mixes together whatever level. I certainly know in swimming that is not the case, so yes, that is

what I really enjoy about it and so it doesn't matter what your level is you can compete at triathlon whether you are a good swimmer and a hopeless runner, or whatever you can do it. It is the sense of achievement of being able to finish the triathlon no matter what the distance. I think that is a very 'balanced' sport and I certainly know that the athletes that we coach, or I coach since they have been in triathlon they have picked up far less injuries than when they were doing single discipline sports

Trish and Louise's subject positioning however, was very different from all the other women, as they had never done any sport previously. Trish says she and her husband decided to take up triathlon because it was something new that they could do together. Louise tells how she was first attracted to triathlon:

I picked up a magazine and there was an article in the back of that on triathlon, sprint triathlon, and I just read it and thought 'Oh my god! Ok, sounds Ok, but you must be mad to do it! ... it was about somebody that had never done one before, and she just broke it down so you know it is so many laps of the swimming pool and it is so many miles on the bike, and a three mile run and I thought, actually individually they are all 'doable'. Ok, I can't swim! But if you could swim, that is doable.

Louise was attracted to triathlon by reading another woman's story. Louise could relate to the storyteller because she too had little experience of sport. Training for a triathlon was the first voluntary sporting activity the storyteller had embarked upon. The fitness magazine discourse (Markula 2003) created spaces where women's voices could be heard. Women were encouraged to tell their stories using their own alternate knowledges and truths. As Richardson (1990) suggests 'new narratives offer patterns for new lives' (p. 26) and, through this story of another woman's life, Louise was 'persuaded' (Barone 1995) that to do triathlon was an achievable goal. This could suggest that triathlon was resistance as freedom (Foucault (1979/1976) as by doing triathlon it lifted Louise from the rut she perceived she was in.

To sum up, the women's collective stories portrayed the women's perceived discourses of triathlon as:

- Triathlon equates with a fitness and health discourse
- Triathlon is an exciting and variable sporting experience (swim, bike run)
- Triathletes are fun loving crazy types, symbolic of eternal youth
- Triathlon has discourse of style; a glamorous image epitomised by clothing, equipment and gadgets

- Triathlon is a healthy sport because it cross trains the body, and thus incurs fewer injuries
- Triathlon is a sociable sport
- Triathlon offers achievable goal for beginners

Swimming, biking and running are individualised sports so it is not essential that one has to belong to a club in order to participate in triathlon. I wanted to find out why each woman joined the club and what benefits she gained from being a member:

Why the triathlon club?

I'm very proud to be part of the triathlon family and to be a member of the club- we're all mad but we're all game for a laugh
(Tina)

Common to all the women's accounts was the importance of triathlon and specifically the role of the club in their subjectivities. Tina describes how being part of triathlon and the club is akin to being a member of a *family*. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) also uses this simile to imply a sense of belonging.

Jackie, Louise, Tina, Deirdre and Martha's reasons for joining the club were to give them a social focus for their sport. Deirdre says:

The social aspects of the club ... is really a big thing in terms of the ... stress associated with over training

Deirdre looks to the club as a support mechanism and to meet training partners. Jackie joined the club just after her second divorce at a time when she was feeling isolated. The main reasons she gave for joining were to meet new friends and to feel a sense of belonging with like-minded people:

I also joined it for social reasons. I wanted to broaden my social life. And I thought I would meet interesting people

Joining the triathlon club in Jackie's case may be seen as resistance as freedom (Foucault 1978/1976), because it was a practice of self-development that helped Jackie transcend the discourses of patriarchy and femininity that had hindered her sporting practices. Jackie tells her story of how becoming a member of the club was a positive step towards rearranging her social world and redefining her personal subjectivities:

I wanted to meet people who accepted women who liked sport, and that was important to me because in my marriage that had definitely not been the case, and I felt that sport was definitely part of my identity, so I wanted to rediscover the type of people who I might get on with

The women's responses suggest that the club facilitates the creation and negotiation of a cultural identity as a triathlete. For Jackie, the club gave her positive reinforcement that sport was an acceptable and valued cultural practice for a woman. As a sport loving, single lawyer Jackie felt less isolated as a member of the triathlon club than she did in her home background, but as I will discuss later she became critical of it.

The year after Sharon joined the club she obtained her elite triathlon licence, became a full time athlete and had her own coach. As she trained in the day, there was no longer a need for her to attend the evening club sessions. The club became solely a social focus for Sharon. When not abroad, she turned up to all the social events. Trish joined the club with her husband. They were both keen cyclists and felt that cycling or running in a group was far more fun than alone. Betty and Deirdre joined the club because of their strong desire to be immersed in the triathlon culture. The club was where they could begin to attain and maintain the embodied subjectivity of a triathlete.

To summarise, each woman was asked what did the membership of the triathlon club brings to their lives. The collective responses included:

- Belonging
- Pride
- Support
- Social focus
- Fun
- Acceptance / reinforcement of subjectivity
- Submersion in the identity

From my involvement in the club I argue that triathlon has multiple meanings for individual women. Metaphorically, the evidence shows the many 'sizes' of triathlon in women's lives (Henderson 1996). In the emergence of new individualised forms of lifestyle sport, such as triathlon, consumers desire a particular way of life (Wheaton and Tomlinson 1998). In feminist thinking,

poststructuralism enables analysis to reveal opportunities for women to forge their own identities and explore their own subjectivities. Poststructuralism invites a reconceptualisation of the self as historically constructed in power relations that simultaneously constitute the subject and are constituted by her (Fenstermaker and West 2002).

The women's social worlds and their embodied subjectivities

Bordo (1993) views culture as made up of 'cultural currents or cultural streams' (p. 142). I asked each participant to depict her social worlds visually and then to interpret the pictures in writing or verbally (for some examples, see appendices 2-7). From each picture, and by reading her description, I could begin to understand not only the foci of the woman's life, but most importantly, I could see how the individual social worlds were made up of various cultural currents (Bordo 1993). In order to analyse a woman's lived experiences in triathlon culture and understand how she creates subjectivities through her leisure consumption, I needed to look at the other social arenas that made up her life.

The data revealed how individuals' lives were made up of a patchwork of different cultural currents and practices that shaped their embodied subjectivities. These included discourses related to the following:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| ▪ Work | ▪ Relaxation |
| ▪ Triathlon | ▪ Partner |
| ▪ Training | ▪ Family |
| ▪ Exercise | ▪ Study |
| ▪ Friend | |
| ▪ Children | |

- 166 -s

The drawings showed just how complex the women's lives were. By deconstructing the pictures I could also see how triathlon intersected with discourses of power. Each woman's social world is unique because it materialised from varying combinations and intensities of cultural streams, but I was able to contrast and compare experiences and present the data as a 'collective story' (Richardson 1990, p. 25). Cultural currents also have '*synchronicity*' with other components of cultural forms and practices (Bordo 1993); for example, the discourse of patriarchy has synchronicity with the discourses of femininity. Other social characteristics such as ability/disability, demographics, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and socio-economic group also traverse the women's worlds. These in

turn implicitly or explicitly all impact in varying degrees and at varying times upon her social world and her subjectivities.

The terms *subject* and *subjectivities* are used to denote the ways in which selves are formed socially in and through language and other systems of meaning (Macdonald, et al. 2002, p. 143). Weedon (1987) argues that subjectivity in poststructuralism is the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world. My data reveals that the woman in triathlon is clearly a thinking subject, consistently directing and in control. In poststructuralism this can be distinguished by the term subjectivity. Subjectivities emerged as a strong theme however, from each diagram, I could analyse the subtleties of individual embodied subjectivities. I was able to see how currents converged, and crucially how each one *related* to others. As Deirdre said:

So my subculture diagram will involve overlapping circles of various sizes varying at different times in my life

I asked the women to ‘draw’ their social worlds in two different years (2000 and a year of their choice). The data shows that cultural currents (Bordo 1993) are dynamic as they came in and out of focus at different times of each woman’s life. Interestingly, the relationships and the overlaps of one current with one another were also dynamic. For example, individual women felt empowered through the physicality of training and triathlon, and described how this empowerment spilled over into other parts of their lives. These *overlaps* of cultural currents (Bordo 1993) in the women’s social worlds showed the complexities and subtleties in their subjectivities.

Subjectivities were consciously and unconsciously a focus in the triathletes’ lives as all of the women could clearly articulate which subjectivities were being maintained or aspired to. Deirdre described her subjectivities as:

*as a triathlete
as athletic
as academic
as a good friend and caring person to the people that matter in
my life and who I come into contact with in the context of
academic and athletic pursuits*

None of the women describes themselves as having a single subjectivity, rather a multiple selection of *subjectivities* (see appendix 8) which suggests that their sense

of self is a multiple concept. The women celebrate resistance as freedom (Foucault 1978/1976) via their multi-subjectivities. For example, Martha works full time in a professional job, is a part-time Masters (MBA) student, she is a triathlete and is married. She believes she does all of these things for intrinsic goals.

Deirdre said “*being a triathlete is an important part of who I am*”. This view was echoed in every woman’s sense of self, but with varying degrees of intensity. All the women, however, stressed that their true subjectivity of *being a triathlete* could only be maintained through an *active* involvement. The women use the differentiated term of being “*an active triathlete* ” when talking about their peers as Harriet shows when she describes the numbers of women in the club: “*I think that about 15 are women. And most of them participate actively, they actually race*”. Discourses are built into the construction of language in triathlon. In terms of cultural meaning in the club, *an active triathlete* would indicate that the person is currently racing. This would carry more status than a triathlete who is only training. As I discussed in Chapter Five, each woman saw herself as a *triathlete* not as a *woman triathlete* or *female triathlete* which were the gendered identity constructions of the BTA. The women themselves also assigned the label “active” to their subjectivity when they were racing. This disparity in terminology shows how the women formed themselves through language (Macdonald, et al. 2002).

Deirdre, Harriet, Tina, Coach and Betty, all told me how the culture of triathlon at some time in their lives was the fulcrum that determined all the other parts. Harriet describes her perception of Coach and her husband Sid’s way of life as:

They have nothing else in their lives except triathlon, triathlon friends, triathlon holidays and I think they seem to think that it applies to everybody ... They were obsessed, absolutely obsessed with it.

Coach and Sid were coaching Harriet while she was at university. Harriet tells how in 1995-1996 she found herself being channelled into a similar lifestyle. Harriet describes the foci of her social world in 1995:

most important was training and racing- I would train as much as possible, where and when I could. Less important was Stan- I would have to train before I went and saw him! I would train even with a cold or the flu. I didn’t really think much about friends and family- friends as they got in the way of training,

didn't have much of a social life due to being knackered all the time.

Between 1995–1996 Harriet listed her priorities as:

*Winning
Training and racing
Stan
Family
Friends and social life
University*

As I will show in the next section Harriet's social world focused on the discourse of performance based on winning, training and racing, these subjectivities were maintained through ritualistic, often obsessive behaviours.

In 1999, Betty drew her social world with triathlon as a central big circle and other cultural currents as smaller circles. Her maintained subjectivity of a triathlete dominated how she lived her life. Betty explains her social worlds by saying:

most of my friends are involved within the triathlon world anyway. It was a job before it became a hobby. ... I do know that people do think that you are obsessed if you do that much training. I suppose in some ways it is a kind of obsession, it is your life, sport is your social life, ... it takes a lot of time, it takes over your whole life, it becomes your friend, it becomes everything.

Betty used a fascinating simile by describing how triathlon was like her friend. When I asked her to elaborate, she described how she felt completely at home, comfortable and at ease in the triathlon culture.

I identified Betty, Harriet, Sharon and Deirdre as the four women who pursued and maintained intense subjectivities in triathlon. The most focused was Deirdre. Her whole sense of self revolves around triathlon. She explains her social world:

There is not (I don't want to create) the space for a significant 'social box' that is separate from my sport and my work- i.e. my friends and social life are mainly linked to my sport and work, and that way, I feel I can have some enjoyable social aspects to my life. To try to establish a separate social arena would create pressure – in terms of time, but also in terms of trying to be a good friend to another set of people.

Deirdre's self-drive led me again to question, 'why'? What was Deirdre trying to gain from her athletic, embodied subjectivities. As Deirdre explained:

it does single me out as 'someone special' is about feeling valued, and doing what you think it will take to be valued

Deirdre's story prompted me to ask why did Deirdre feel she had to go to such extremes to "*feel special*" and to "*feel valued*"? She admitted that she often asks herself the same question "*what it is I'm trying to prove and to whom?*" An answer may lie in the story of her childhood and specifically in the relationship with her father. Deirdre's father was a very clever man, who as Deirdre described adopted very 'masculinised standard' (his motto was be the best, compete, succeed at all costs). Deirdre's father was highly critical of how she looked, her love of sport and the clothes she wore. Because Deirdre did not assume the symbolic markers that are aligned with the discourses of femininity and womanhood, he showed both exasperation and disappointment. Deirdre explains how this impacted upon her:

striving for this identity, this recognition and achievement I think again goes back to, you know, rejection of who I was by my father, what I looked like. He essentially wanted me to be a glamorous, slim, a woman whose basic priority would be marrying someone successful and bringing up a family. Equally my brother, he hoped, would be the successful man ... but my brother worked incredibly hard and I think inspired me to very much do the same. ... and I'd have felt enormous guilt if, although I was bright, if I hadn't worked very hard as well.

Deirdre was battling to live up to the patriarchal standards of her father in relation to herself and her brother. Driven by guilt and rejection, she tried to make her father acknowledge that he was proud of her to "*make me feel special, to make me feel valued*". He wanted Deirdre to align with the discourses of femininity when she lived in resistance to that. Since she saw her brother, not as able as her, working hard, she felt she must do the same if not better. But neither of them could fit in with the patriarchal discourses her father had in mind: her brother aligned to discourses of masculinity and Deirdre aligned to discourses of femininity. Recognition as an academic and athlete meant failure as daughter for Deirdre.

Tina wrote in her personal diary "*Most people know me as an athlete...when people think of me, the first thing they think is athlete*". This suggests that Tina like Deirdre enjoys positive recognition from 'a wider audience' (Donnelly 1993). Martha also describes how being a triathlete gets a positive reaction from others:

I would probably introduce myself as a runner primarily and as a triathlete secondary to that. It depends, I don't know, if I was trying to impress, it would be that I do triathlons I think. But if it was just in pub conversations it would be "oh well I run mainly, but I do do some triathlons" and then everyone goes 'wow!' It has got a real impact, it is quite funny because most of my

friends just think that you are mad, but for people who don't know you, like the people that I go climbing with its all like 'my god! You must be really fit!' People at work – 'well, how do you get the time?' is their first comment! But yeah, I think that it has got an interest about it because if you are a runner, everyone knows what running is all about, if you are a triathlete, people think that they know, but they are not quite sure so they like to ask you a few questions, to make sure that you are thinking along the same lines. ... I like to be seen as extremely fit, I would hate for someone to say 'oh she is not very fit' I would be really offended by that, not, probably not that I would be hurt by it but because I know that I am not, and it would be false representation. But, yeah, I think that it has got a good image triathlon, and I like to think that 'yes, I am a triathlete and yes I look fit, I can do what 98% of the population couldn't do' and I like that feeling.

In my dialogue with Martha she conveys how the mystery of triathlon intrigues the wider audience. But unlike Deirdre, she makes no comment about her family's attitude having affected her negatively. Martha, Sandy, Claire, Betty, Trish and Tina all use their physicality and triathlete subjectivity to impress others in a social setting. As Tina says in conjunction with Martha's friends thinking her 'mad':

I think that most people think when you say 'oh well I do triathlon' – that you are a complete and utter nutter! They can't imagine anybody doing those three things one after another literally come out a swimming pool and jump on a bike and there you go. But I think that is the appeal of it all really, it is so different and it is such a challenge!

Tina explains that to be a triathlete conjures up the image of “*I am a triathlete so therefore I am really fit and super! There is an element of that, I'm proud to say that I am a triathlete!*” Coach agreed with this and said:

People say 'wow! You have really got to be dedicated, you really have got to be good, you must be so fit!' and things like that and I think that any woman that does sport full stop, is seen as 'a level up' if you understand what I mean.

Coach's phrase “*any woman that does sport full stop, is seen as 'a level up'*” implies that in contemporary Western culture the discourses of femininity has started to change. Value is now placed on women's healthy fit bodies as well as the negative disbelief shown to Tina and Martha. So in some cultures the sportswoman may now have more status than a woman that does no sport. Language is central to the development of subjectivities (Weedon 1997) so an alternative reading, shows how ‘fit bodies’ in Western culture are aligned with

discourses of femininity, specifically sexiness and attractiveness. Sexualised bodies, defined by notions of ideal feminine beauty (toned, athletic, sagless, bulgeless, (Bordo 1993)), provide the grid for power relations of the body (Castelnuovo and Guthrie 1998).

Deirdre, perceived that her subjectivity of “*being a triathlete ... and doing triathlon ... and talking triathlon*” gained her respect with like-minded colleagues at work (especially men). As I will discuss in the next section Deirdre’s story reflected her desire to be “*one of the boys*” or what I term *an honorary boy*. My research diary recounts a conversation that I had with Deirdre:

Deirdre was giving her thoughts on why she fitted in so well at --
----this premise of ‘one of the boys’ really was true, she is sure that she was ‘accepted’ more because she could keep up with Steve on a bike than for her ‘personality’. She described how it was her ‘identity’ as a ‘mad’ ‘crazy’ athlete that was her forte with the boys! She told of another story of going for a job and at the interview the organisers saying that at lunch they had arranged a ‘run’ because they knew that she was a runner. It was as if this was the ‘hidden’ interview, and they talked more about the fact that she had beaten most of the ‘men’ up this huge hill than they did about the position she had gone for

Poststructuralism suggests that where power exists then there will be resistance, therefore, power relations are always being modified. All of the women’s stories were examples of how living the embodied subjectivity of a triathlete had given them moments of empowerment (Markula 1993). This empowerment the women then carried over to other social forms. For example, Tina told how she was far more confident when meeting new people socially as *a triathlete*, than she did as *a nurse*, because she perceived that a sports subjectivity carried more status.

It also emerged from the data that subjectivities are not fixed and allow individuals to adopt different subjectivities at different times. Claire’s social world was one example. At 15 her two main subjectivities are as “*a triathlete*”, and as “*a schoolgirl*”. Most of the time, Claire tells how with the support from her family, she successfully manages to juggle commitments. Claire explains, however, how there is mounting pressure between these two conflicts of interest:

That is a real nightmare! Because this year I have got my GCSEs, the last couple of years that I have been doing triathlon, ... schoolwork was fairly easy as GCSEs were a two-year course. So now I have got my GCSE exams in the summer and the last year of being a youth, (14-16) you know I want to do

really well in my youths but yeah, I want to do really well in my exams

Louise tells how her subjectivity as a deputy head teacher dominated her social world up until early 1999, and how this role was driven by the dominant discourse of performance (an obsession to achieve). Louise took up triathlon later that year, and suddenly, her social world had a totally different focus and the subjectivity of a deputy head teacher drifted out of focus. Louise describes how she has an ‘obsessive personality’ and this meant that she could only have one main focus at a time to the detriment of the other. As Louise expresses:

it is the first thing that I have come across that has taken me away from my schoolwork. Because when you are a teacher your schoolwork and your life are one of the same. You go to school, you come home from school, you have school work to do for the next day and so school is actually a lot of your personal life as well. Even at the weekends it takes up a lot of your time, but I'd found something else that took up my time and that I wanted to do. It has changed my perceptions of my schoolwork now because if I have got the opportunity, I would much rather go out and train than do my schoolwork. It has put 'school' into perspective. It is a good thing but what has taken its place is that triathlon when I was training for something took over, so again, a compulsive personality I suppose! I have to be absorbed in 1 thing, I can't be absorbed in 2 things! So I was always absorbed into school and now I am absorbed into triathlon, and school has gone out of the window (a bit) ... But it makes you look at your schoolwork and think, well this is not the end of the world!

Jackie was aware that her aspired subjectivities would include sport from an early age, however, she tells how the discourses of patriarchy and femininity constrained her development of a sense of self. She describes how at certain times of her life patriarchal relations have forced physical activity out of focus. Jackie said:

I have felt my whole life that I have had this identity that keeps getting 'chipped away' that people keep coming in and out of my life and they take something away and I don't get it back. All I am searching for is when I am 'free-standing' that I – I will meet prats same as I always have done but they will just glide off me they won't take anything with them, I won't take them away and they won't take me away. I will be intact! And I will come away and I will have that coldness about me that I need. One day I will be where I want to be...

Jackie illustrates how subjectivities are dynamic and constantly changing with both time and space. Jackie feels she has not yet reached all her aspired subjectivities but that she is a “*work in progress*”. She says:

*I just want to be in a place where I recognise who I am, I am comfortable with who I am, I feel that is very important and all of this (sport, the triathlon club) are ingredients for it, because I think that gives me ‘freedom’ and that is what I want ...
My quest is to ultimately surround myself with a life that ‘allows’ me to be ...free standing to be myself and to maintain the person I aspire to be ...*

Martha’s story also illustrated how her subjectivity of being a triathlete would sometimes fade temporarily or as she put it “*take a back burner*”. By deconstructing Martha’s drawings, her circles (that represent cultural currents (Bordo 1993)) often vary in size and sometimes relate differently to each other at certain times in the season:

number one priority is work, the reason being it brings in the money, and if you don’t perform at work you lose your job and everything else falls apart as it were. That priority will probably stay there for four to six months ...

My findings would concur with Henderson (1996) who argues that there are different sizes of women’s leisure. My data shows, however, how the different sizes of women’s triathlon do not just occur *between* women. The size of triathlon is dynamic and has synchronicity (Bordo 1993) with time and space in a woman’s embodied social world. Harriet’s story is an example of this, she says: “*I used to be (obsessed) but I got out of that mentality for the better I think, and I opted to have a social life*”. Harriet drew and then explained her social world again in 2000 and this time the size of triathlon was very different:

*Most important: Friends and Family (including social life)- various problems going on in the Smith household that need to be sorted. Health - Have had to learn that training when ill doesn’t benefit you at all and that you are better off leaving the training for a few days therefore recovering quicker. Work-Takes up a lot of time but very enjoyable.
Less Important- Training and racing- have now realised that it is not the end of the world if I don’t train and that there are far more important things to do*

Harriet listed the priorities in her social world in 2000 as:

*Friends and Family
Enjoyment of life*

Work
Health
Cats
Training and racing

As I discussed earlier, 1995-1996 Harriet aspired to and was trying to maintain subjectivities not only as *a triathlete*, but more specifically as *a winner*. In 2000 however, training and racing had been relegated to last place. Friends and family were now the most important foci in Harriet's social world, whereas 5 years ago she said: "*I didn't really think much about friends and family- friends as they got in the way of training*". It is impossible to pinpoint the triggers that changed the emphasis of Harriet's social world, there were however, various key events going on in her life between 1995-2000. She graduated from university and moved up to live with Stan. She started her first job as a probationary teacher. She was constantly ill, with recurring bouts of glandular fever. Her parents split up suddenly. She was now 22 years old and arguably more mature and may have been more aware of the dangers of overtraining. Harriet describes how her "*mentality changed*" and this meant instead of ignoring the warning signs in her body, she finally took notice and evaluated the risks she was taking on her health by driving herself so hard (as I will discuss in the next section).

Sandy describes how Paula and her family were always the main foci of her social world:

Definitely relationship and home life is the most important thing to me, um, I enjoy my job should be second, I try to make it that and then, relationships mean my family partner that stuff and my career has always been second, it is always been like that and sport has been a close third, because by being fit enables me to deal with everything in the other two and if I have any problems with the other two and I get really pissed off and have a row with someone I can go running and get rid of it. So it is quite good for that.

Sandy's story also tells how her embodied subjectivity of a sportswoman has synchronicity (Bordo 1993) with her sexuality (as I discuss later). She explains.

I like the feeling, I like being fit and I like being thought of as being 'sporty'. Sporty spice! That is the 'gay subculture'!

Sandy, Martha, Tina, Deirdre, Betty, Harriet, and Louise's stories suggested that physical activity was crucial to their social world to keep other cultural currents running smoothly. Sandy said "*if I have any problems with the other two (work or*

family life) *and I get really pissed off and have a row with someone I can go running and get rid of it*".

I argue that a visual drawing of an athlete's social world could be of considerable importance for determining the balance of young athlete's lives. As Harriet said:

it is nice having a really good balance, because you just think that I am just too obsessed with it or there is just nothing else in your life sometimes apart from training. Then it is just not fun at all; then, you just get bored with it.

Deirdre agreed with this:

The degree of overlap from one social arena to another is a key issue in relation to the interest in 'balanced lifestyles' and also an issue in relation to injury and its effects

The culture of the club was found to be a central focus for all the women at different times in their social worlds and to influence their subjectivities. By asking each woman to describe the feelings she had when she was injured or ill I could begin to understand how being isolated from triathlon affects the woman's subjectivities.

The effect of injury on the woman's subjectivities

The women tell in their accounts how becoming part of the triathlon cultures were experienced as feelings of empowerment. My data found however, that if all the cultural currents in the woman's social world are synchronised with being an active triathlete, a major injury or illness could prove to be devastating. Deirdre describes feelings of being acculturated:

Being forced by injury or illness in not being able to train. It's not the fact that you can't train, it's the impact it has on your whole lifestyle, your whole confidence, your identity, everything because when you are training at these sorts of levels, and you're working, you've got a job which you're committed to and working hard as well, apart from those two things, and generally carrying out the everyday sort of mundane things in life there is not a lot of time for anything else and inevitably your social life revolves around those people you train with and know through sport and if suddenly you're not actively participating in that sport you're missing out on a lot more than just the sport. And it leads to isolation, loneliness and I think when you are injured or something, I mean I'm the last person who'd want to go along and spectate, or even necessarily be with those people that I'd normally train with because that just rubs in the fact that you're injured or you're ill and you can't do it and, therefore, as I say I, there is this loneliness and isolation, and I don't think that

people who aren't in that situation realise the impact that it does have on people ... it is a major part of your life that isn't there and it's very, very difficult to cope with being unable to train has major knock on effects in terms of the notions of destroying the patterns and relations you enjoy as part of your life. ...

The subjectivity of being a triathlete was so central for Deirdre that isolation from training means not being able to be the person that she sees herself as being. Her whole sense of self becomes 'foreign' as she is forced into doing mundane tasks. Some women described how when injured or ill they were forced to reinscribe themselves (Markula 2003) often as outsiders. As Harriet explained:

I think that I was ... quite obsessive and it seemed to be the be all and end all, if I could not train then it was like the end of the world! And now I have had to change my way of thinking really. It does get me depressed now because it has been so long since I have trained, properly...

Injury manifests itself in feelings of guilt. Deirdre said "*I just get disappointed with myself, disappointed and feel that I have let myself down*" Tina describes her frustration when she cannot maintain her subjectivity of a triathlete:

when I do get ill ... I feel pretty frustrated ... when I couldn't do anything because I just felt dreadful! You feel like a blob ... you are climbing up the wall! Well I am, I just hate it. I've just got to do something active, and you can't...

She goes on to suggest that being ill or injured affected her sense of self: "*the problem is with it is that if you do all these things, you can't find something that will substitute*". When a triathlete is out for a few weeks or months they are not only isolated from their physical training but often their social support is also removed. When injured, or ill, most of the women try to remain a part of the triathlon scene from the sidelines. For example they would come and watch at the pool. The different relations of power (Foucault 1978/1976), however, between spectator and competitor often reinscribe their subjectivities. Harriet had glandular fever and was advised to rest for 3 months. She described herself in the context of triathlon as:

a 'hanger on' at the moment, a groupie really I will go to the races and support everybody ... but I still class myself as a triathlete, if someone said 'oh what do you do?' I would say 'oh I am a teacher and I also do triathlon' – at the moment I am 'a very unfit triathlete! Having an 'off season!'

Harriet was one of the few women in the club that continued to be regarded as an 'honorary boy' (a term I will discuss later). I suggest this was because of her established reputation as an elite triathlete and partly because she is the partner of a founding member. Deirdre (as I will also discuss in the next section) has continuous health issues that may eventually force her to give up physical activity. Because all her other relating and intersecting cultural streams radiate from her subjectivity as a triathlete, breaking away from triathlon will mean a fundamental loss of her sense of self. Deirdre would have to learn to redefine herself and to enjoy other less active pursuits that she now considers inferior. She is currently weighing up the risks and choosing to continue to be immersed in the culture of triathlon, to lose it would be like losing who, and what she is, and her way of life. something, she knows for certain she is not prepared to risk.

In summary, Butler (1990) argues that early feminism had made a mistake by trying to assert that 'women' were a group with common characteristics and interests. Barrett and Philips (1992) show the movement away from macro theory towards local studies. My study highlights the dangers of theorising women as a homogenous group as this reinforces an unwitting regulation and reification of gender. In poststructural feminism, there is no longer a single 'truth' or explanation of a particular issue. Triathlon *was* a very important part of the women's subjectivities but in line with (Henderson 1996) I argue there were many 'sizes' of triathlon in the women's social worlds. For most women the subjectivity of a triathlete was only a part of their sense of self. Based upon the findings of this study, the notion of a subculture of women's triathlon can be maintained when one considers collective action as shown in the AGM (2000). When one considers women's subjectivities there are differences between the women. This suggests that each woman has an embodied *social world*.

The subjectivity of being *a triathlete* contributes to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of each woman, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding herself in relation to the world (Weedon 1987). In my study each woman's social world is multidimensional and her sense of self is made up from multiple *subjectivities*. The data suggests that a woman's subjectivity of a triathlete denotes that she forms herself through language as well as being formed in part by the club and experiences of it. My data reveals, however, that as a woman and a stranger to the sport, the aspired subjectivity of a triathlete was often

hard to achieve. These subject positions have alternate knowledges and truths and as such, women experienced the club differently. Jackie's story told how her hopes of *fitting in, being a triathlete* and *belonging* to a club of like-minded people were soon dashed. As she elaborates:

I thought that they would be really exciting, broad individuals, but all they were worried about were their times! And it is very intimidating when, you get cut off in sentences and you can't tell them, you can't be yourself. And then it comes down to who has got the best time, and if you have the worst time, then you are the person who is not taken particularly seriously. I have taken a time out from that because I do not want that to be my defining quality! I am a lot more than a triathlete!

Too much is focused on "my" performance ... want to do better, and what they want to do is go out and get ready made, like you know, ready packaged triathletes, superstars. ... they have got people in that club that they could make great triathletes, really good, they have got some real talent at all different areas ... they need to nurture it and there is no point belonging to a triathlon club unless that happens, because it is a sport that you may as well do on your own. So I think my view point is that I love the sport, and I really want to continue to do it, probably won't race quite as much as I have done ... but I want to, is there any point belonging to a club if they don't nurture your skill?

Jackie's and other women's similar problems derived from issues of access and acceptance into the triathlon club from the subject position of a stranger or novice who wants to learn more skills, not just to socialise and be present for recreational reasons.

The subject positioning of novices in the club

Novices and complete strangers to triathlon were the individuals who experienced becoming a member of the club most daunting. Feminists (Adams St. Pierre 2000) explain how the subject positions available to women not only limit their agency but also enable certain kinds of knowledge and action not possible from other positions. Novices have subject positions that enable alternate knowledges and truths than those of established triathletes in the club setting. As Paula said:

when I first went there, there were really really good people, and there were really good people andgood people!!(Laughs)

This constructs asymmetrical relations of power and as Louise says, as a beginner, accessing the club and triathlon was scary, unwelcoming:

it is very intimidating. Triathlon and triathlon people are very intimidating! (joining the club) it is intimidating to start off with, and I don't know, I can't compare that with any other sport, because I don't do other sports.

New members are first invited to attend a swimming session. My diary recounts my own first impressions as a complete beginner as those of fear and intimidation too. I write:

the pool, a small enclosed hot steamy space that echoes, accentuating every kick and splash only intensified the mass of androgynous (because of the goggles and caps) robot types bodies... the sheer energy is electric as they plough up and down without needing to catch breath. The sheer effortlessness of their performances... what am I doing? I thought I could swim, but this is more like a swimming club night. I think I had better come back when I have practised.

Louise identifies that it was similar images of fit bodies, highly tuned techniques, and competent performances that nearly stopped her from returning:

because it is perceived to be male dominated and is a competitive sport, the levels of testosterone are 'flying around!' all over the place – there are 'egos' here that you have got to be careful of! And then to walk in and you are woman and then to know that you are not any good, or you perceive yourself not to be any good, and it is very, you need someone to take you by the hand...

From the data I conclude that joining the club as a woman, a novice *and* a weak or non-swimmer is the most intimidating of all combinations. This was Louise, Martha and Sandy's positioning when they first came to the club. Sandy tells me:

I think that I did not know what to expect and it (the club) is very swimming dominated ... it is so difficult to do all three with a triathlon club, so it was very good for swimming, but if you did not know how to swim when you got there then you would feel like the proverbial 'fish out of water'. I know that I certainly did when I first went there, I thought 'what the hell have I let myself in for?' ...if you weren't a good swimmer when you went there and you did not have a big personality to cope with it I think that you would be like 'I am not coming back again!' It is quite intimidating,

A: So, as a novice triathlete what were your first impressions of the club?

S: I think, I mean it is difficult I suppose what I think about the club is very much tied up with the state of sport in Britain in terms of ... we are not overwhelmed with amenities, like swimming pools we are able to use, so it is just nice to go

somewhere and swim, but I found it quite intimidating because my swimming experiences would have stopped when I was at school, about the age of 11 so I have never been involved with how a swimming club functions and I had no idea what a 'chicken wing' was or 'catch-up' (arms only techniques in front crawl) or any of that stuff, um, and I think that had I not gone with someone I knew and there was someone there who I vaguely recognised then I probably wouldn't have gone back again although Martha was the one who always said 'hello' every week. And then gradually a few other people started speaking a bit, because the set up is that you go and you swim and that's what you do for the hour because it is paid for, ... and there is not a huge amount of stopping and talking unless it is people in your lane, and they all look the same to me, everybody, as the only thing that you can tell is gender, (obviously!) ... and all the men have beards and no hair and they wear swimming hats so unless you see people with their hats and goggles on I wouldn't recognise them! (laughs) for months afterwards, and even now, we did the 'Swimathon' I thought 'do I know you?' and then I thought 'yes I do know you when I do that!' (Sandy made a gesture to pull her hair back as if she had a swim hat on) But I feel happier in an environment where someone goes 'Hi, how are you da de da de da' which is what I am used to in the running world. Intimidating, my first impressions, very intimidating! And I have a long history of being involved with groups and clubs and things and people going into strange environments as that is what I do at work, so I thought 'is it me? Or is just the fact that everyone just knows everybody else as it is quite small cliquey group?' I don't know why it just took a while to break in.

Louise went on to explain a similar experience. She told me that even after braving the swimming for several weeks there was another 'rite of passage' that beginners to the club have to endure – that of their first club Bar-B-Q. Again I could totally relate to what she was saying as I experienced a very similar thing. Louise said:

But when I started meeting people 'en masse' it was very difficult to 'break rank' to break in, because then you went back to being the 'outsider' you were the new person and you didn't know anybody and they didn't know you, and, I went to a Bar-B-Q and three of the four people I knew weren't there, so I had one person I knew! That was very, that was very intimidating, and not very welcoming, ... it was hard to break through the ranks, they were all very welcoming, once you were swimming, but when you had your clothes back on and you were socialising it was very cliquey.

The starting point to theorising novices' experiences of environment of the triathlon as intimidating was Foucault's (1978/1976) relational understanding of

power. As I have explained in the previous chapter, for the first four years the club attracted elite ready-made athletes and the dominant discourse of the club was one that paralleled competitive capitalistic sport (arguably masculinised, performance based, competitive discourses). Only since 1999 did the club start to get its new and soon to be its biggest clientele; that of beginners. My interpretation of these examples is that novices are operating in the boundaries of a script they have not yet fully grasped and they therefore are intimidated. The relationship between power and knowledge in triathlon constructs asymmetrical relations of power between individual players. Those women (and men) who have alternate knowledges and truths that do not include specific knowledge of triathlon are marginalised. Again, however, where there is power there may be resistance.

From my dialogue with the women, there are clearly residual practices that support the dominant discourses of patriarchy in the club (complaints from the men about a *women only* training day) and also examples of practices in self-development that transcend the dominant discourses (resistance as freedom) (Foucault 1997/1984). Louise's story highlights the cliquey behaviour of the long-standing members of the club that I suggest is an example of reverse resistance. The older members are the elite, whose voices clearly articulate that they want the club to remain competitively focused and so make it difficult for beginners to "*break the ranks*". Jackie's narrative describes how she voiced concerns about the club from the subject position of a complete beginner at one of the committee meetings, but her ideas were dismissed:

I got this idea that they just wanted to bring in all these ready-made triathletes. All the ideas I had that were focused on helping people who wanted to learn, were dismissed, ... Last year they didn't really want me to go into the National Relays, I wanted to have a go but they wouldn't let me I wasn't good enough! This year they didn't mention it to me, so I had no opportunity to even try and run for my club ... I just felt I was listening to a clash of individuals who wanted to show off about their particular achievements, and what we weren't doing was achieving any progress for the people in the club as a whole.

Jackie constantly refers to '*they*' in her narrative. I interpret this reference initially to the committee who act as the gatekeepers of power by selecting the teams. '*They*' however, could also be referring to 'a guard' that she could not see such as that in Foucault's (1979/1975) panopticon of power. Jackie believes that her

performance is under surveillance at all times, and that her body is constantly being judged. Jackie's story positions the discourses of femininity as a dominant discourse in triathlon as the body is often exposed and available to the gaze (Hargreaves 1994). Beginners often compare their bodies to those of elite triathletes. Jackie's story tells how the discourse of femininity is normalising her to be self-loathing (Bordo 1993) of the shape and tone of her body. Just like the prisoners, Jackie began to discipline herself, even when a guard is not present. As Bordo (1993) argued 'prevailing forms of selfhood and subjectivity (gender among them) are maintained, not chiefly through physical restraint and coercion (although social relations may certainly contain such elements), but through individual self-surveillance and self-corrections to norms' (p. 27).

In poststructuralism most importantly, 'power relations are obliged to change with the resistance' (Foucault 1997/1984, p. 167). At the AGM (2000) individual women also voiced their concerns about the intimidating nature of the club. Their voices were loud enough to ensure that new cultural practices (for example the new members representative) were put in place to transcend the dominant discourse of elitism (resistance as freedom (Foucault 1997/1984)). Louise describes:

I think that a lot of people now felt that it was very cliquey, but did not say anything because they thought it was just them, and when we had the AGM there was a big 'blood letting' of how cliquey everybody thought it was, and then from my point of view I think that it has got a lot better

Sandy said that she noticed a change in the dominant discourses of the club:

But as I have got to know people a bit better it has become a lot easier, and I have noticed a bit of a 'scene change' over the last couple of months and its different. I think different people have become involved now and are breaking it out a little bit

A formal confirmation of the club's acknowledgement of novices was published later in 2001 on the club's web site. The new equity statement and reworded language on the web site assure that all members would have 'a genuine and equal opportunity to participate in triathlon *at all levels of performance* and in *all roles*' (which were the two main themes that emerged from the AGM). The formally expressed discourses of the club now welcome and provide for the needs of novices.

The data reveals a *novice* holds a very different subject position than an *active triathlete* in the club and the wider culture of triathlon. The difference between the two subject positions is concerned with the accumulation of status gained only by competing in (and finishing) races. The faster the time or the longer the race the more status one accrues. Power relations, knowledges and truths are constantly changing (Foucault 1978/1976) in triathlon and are a reflection of experience and one's subject positioning in the club. Personal bests carry recognised symbolic value. Novices are dependent upon the advice of others and have to learn about the cultural rules, codes and practices of triathlon which, in turn, construct their scripts. Performing the script in a convincing way is the essence of being an active triathlete. The most convincing performances come from the elite triathletes because these have the greatest status. This status, or cultural capital manifests itself in the techniques of swimming, biking and running that represent the inscription of physical capital and in the personalised curriculum-vitae of race results that represent symbolic capital (Shilling 2003).

The dominant discourses that emerged from the data are discourses of performance, femininity and patriarchy, which are all constructed in and through power relations and gender power relations. Each discourse is never free-standing rather it is dependant upon other relational discourses of power to maintain it. A discourse can involve the same behavioural outcomes in terms of performing or training, but it can be empowering, transgressive and freeing for some women, and become dangerous and constraining for others.

As we have seen in this chapter, relations of power in the women's social worlds are in a constant state of change. In the relationship between truth, self and power, Foucault (1988) argues that power both subjugates *and* makes subject to (Markula 2003). From my data the themes of empowerment and transformation emerged. There were many examples in the women's stories where the woman as a subject, *was* active in the negotiation of discursive practices, challenging, resisting and transforming herself (Bordo 1993). Late in my analysis I realised that the theorisation needed to go further. The final scene of the women's stories gave examples of sporting practices they consciously employed to maintain their subjectivities or to escape from dominant discourses of power. I turned back to the literature, and looked deeper into Foucault's work and other feminist

appropriations of Foucault. I found my additional theoretical framework in the technologies of the self (Foucault 1997/1984, Markula 2003),

Woman's technologies of the self

Technologies of the self may be described as practices that:

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault 1988b, p. 18).

Through these technologies the woman begins to recognise herself as a subject and in this sense she can be understood to counter the dominant discourses of power. Rail and Harvey (1995) argue that the technologies of the self release the individual from the control of the disciplinary practices and consequently lead to self-transformation. Sport feminists such as Cole (1993) and Markula (1995) have analysed how sport acts a technology of power and domination. There are only a few studies on sport, however, that have approached the technologies of the self from a sports feminist perspective (Markula 2003, Guthrie and Castelnovo 2001, Ashton-Shaeffer et al. 2001). Wesely (2001) detected the technologies of the self in athletes' changing body shapes, however, Chapman (1997) regarded these similar technologies as coping mechanisms in discourses of power. These contrasting findings suggest that maybe sport and, specifically in my study, triathlon can function both as a technology of power and a technology of the self.

A woman can be seen as operating simultaneously in two terrains: 'the inside' and 'the outside' (Markula 2003, p. 98). A feminist interpretation of Foucault's earlier works focuses on dimensions located outside of the woman; dimensions of truth (how women are subjected to knowledge) and power (how women as subjects act upon each other). Foucault's later work (1997/1984) when appropriated through the same feminist lens, centres on the woman's relationship with herself, an 'insider' dimension and particularly how the inside (the relation to herself or subjectivity) can derive from power and knowledge without being dependent on them (Deleuze 1988). Foucault conceptualises this relationship as, 'the double'. 'The double is a type of interiorisation of the outside: the doubling of one's own relationship with others: a relationship that is never a projection of the interior, on the contrary it is an interiorisation of the outside' (Deleuze 1988, p.

98). Doubling requires a 'folding' of the outside force that relates it back to the self. This is subjectivation: 'a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them' (Deleuze 1988, p.101). Recuperated by power-relations and relations of knowledge, the relation to oneself is continually reborn (Markula 2003, p. 98).

Influenced by Markula (2003) the next chapter examines triathlon as a woman's technology of the self. I look at the final scene of the women's stories as they tell how they use their bodies to maintain their subjectivities. In my dialogue with the women I not only seek to understand their reasons in terms of cultural practices, but more importantly analyse whether or not the women's voices are conveying a 'consciously planned, critical resistance' to dominant discourses (Markula 2003, p. 103). Lloyd (1996) argues that 'particular practices of femininity have the potential to operate transgressively' (p. 250) Chapter Seven asks the question is this also true of the practices of triathlon? Do the practices surrounding triathlon operate transgressively? As I will show from the data, at times discourses can be both empowering and dangerous (Deirdre, Betty).

Chapter Seven: Triathlon as a space for women's technologies of the self

Cultural practices and the maintenance of subjectivities in triathlon

By deconstructing the drawings of each woman's social worlds and by listening to her explanations, I was able to understand what subjectivities the woman was trying to maintain. The previous chapter shows how each woman aspires to a subjectivity of a *triathlete*. I now focus on each woman's behaviour and explore how she maintains her subjectivities through the cultural practices she employs. In line with Butler's (1993) notions of gender performativity and the materialisation of bodies I ask what are the performances of women in triathlon? The last part of the chapter discusses the women's cultural practices aligned with the discourse of health.

Several themes emerged from the data: clothing, equipment and fashion; ritualistic training routines; and issues surrounding eating. These themes are all entrenched in power relations and discourses of the body.

This chapter explores the relationship between the power and knowledge discourse of femininity and the feminising practices of dieting and compulsive exercise. In line with Bartky (1988) I examine the technologies of femininities that create the feminine body-subject. Diet and exercise can be a woman's technology of power as it is often the women subjecting themselves to feminine discourse. They can also be women's technologies of the self when they consciously aim at a physical transformation that will serve to counter the dominant discourses of power. What a woman wears, what she eats and how she trains in triathlon may be constructed by dominant discourses of femininity, and therefore, such practices could be argued as technologies of domination or power. Alternately, feeling free to choose what she wears, how she trains and what she eats could be seen as resistance as freedom (Foucault 1979/1975) and be momentarily empowering for the woman. When cultural practices are aligned with critical awareness, however, these practices may then be theorised as transgressive practices or technologies of the self (Foucault 1997/1984, Markula 2003, Lloyd 1996) as they challenge the dominant discourses of power.

The technology of the self is a complex concept. Wesely (2001) and Chapman (1997) debate the difference between coping mechanisms and developments of the self. A coping mechanism is a reaction to the effect of power relations. For example, through the interviews Jackie told how she uses sport as a *release valve* for the

pressures at home. She would play squash, feel momentarily empowered, but then return home to suffer the same abuse in a patriarchal regime of power. The difference between a coping strategy and a technology of the self is the presence of an embodied conscious self. Betty, for example, consciously immersed herself in triathlon practices as a way to develop her subjectivities. She described how, through triathlon, there were times when she was empowered by training; she broadened her social circle through the people she met in triathlon; she travelled a lot with her job and was a powerful figure in the organisation of major triathlon events. Betty reformed her sense of self through triathlon and most important, she *consciously* used triathlon as a tool for removing herself (physically at first and then through embodied power) from the patriarchal power relations that once constricted her.

The first section examines whether clothing acts as a technology of power (perpetuates the discourse of femininity) or can be considered a technology of the self (clothing and equipment used to transgress the dominant discourses of power). The women's stories reveal how clothing, equipment and fashion serve as cultural practices of triathlon that affect individual subjectivities of being *a triathlete* in different ways.

Equipment, clothing and fashion in triathlon

The tight fitting clothing and fashion of triathlon could be seen to perpetuate the discourse of femininity and specifically the discourse of the sexualised body. The skintight clothing is very revealing and puts emphasis on the Western idealised notion of beauty as toned, slim and bulgeless. Lloyd (1996), however, argues that if a woman's conscious, critical efforts to make a political statement through dress can provoke 'a critical querying reaction' (p. 258) she has problematised women's present cultural condition, and can have an effect on power relations. Because triathlon has three disciplines it affords more variety of clothing and equipment than single sports. Clothing and equipment play a functional purpose in swimming, biking and running as they facilitate the activities. Clothing provides some protection from adverse conditions (for example triathlon wet suits for cold water) whereas the equipment contributes in the context of safety (helmets) and technological efficiency of triathlon (for example carbon fibre bike frames, quick release pedals). Triathletes have to learn key 'transition skills' which involve the art of changing clothing and equipment on the move during the race and in a limited

zone. Because both transitions are timed, triathlons have been won and lost in transition. Much of triathlon equipment and clothing is also fashionable and attracts big designer names such as Oakley.

The women showed that their decision to take on the subjectivity of *a triathlete* was individual, however, being accepted as a triathlete by *others* could be seen to take two distinct steps. Donnelly (1993) argues that there are two audiences; the larger culture (for example friends, family, the stranger in the street) and, the more important one, the established members of triathlon itself. Novices to triathlon sometimes construct a personal picture of what it takes to be accepted as a triathlete which is different from established triathletes. Novices through their lack of experience may bring other fashion frames to triathlon (like mountain bikes) which are seen to be outside the dominant triathlon culture. Other newcomers, however, often try and buy respect and arrive at the club with all the latest, most expensive, triathlon gear; new lightweight carbon bike, tri-bars, designer sunglasses. Although this type of initial modelling may be good enough to be accepted by the larger culture, acceptance by established triathletes in the club requires far more. Donnelly (1993) found that new members of a sports 'subculture' began to adopt mannerisms and attitudes, styles of dress, language and behaviour that they have perceived through a variety of means. This implies that strangers to the setting deconstruct the dominant discourses in the club, compare them to their own sense of self and then some actively reform themselves in order to fit in (for example Jackie). This guided me to ask what symbolic discourses for women in triathlon are entrapped in my data, and are equipment, clothes and fashion used as technologies of power or technologies of self? Drawing on my interviews and field notes I found that when the women talked about equipment, and clothing and fashion several discourses were dominant. The discourses that the women linked to clothing were: the discourse of femininity; specifically the discourse of the sexualised body; body image; attractiveness and the 'gaze' (both men and women as voyeurs). The discourses that the women linked to equipment were: the discourse of money; which they aligned with class and capitalism. The discourse of masculinity featured strongly when the women were talking about 'techy talk'. In issues of equipment the relationship between the truth, self and power clearly both subjugates strangers and beginners *and* makes subject to (Markula 2003) those elite triathletes who can both

use technical gadgets efficiently, but more importantly, have the performance to align the equipment with.

Triathlon is a very expensive sport as there is so much equipment to buy. The starting price of a carbon fibre bike frame alone is about £1,000, a fact that favours those with significant disposable income. The women describe triathlon as a ‘gadget sport’. The interviews revealed how the discourse of performance has constructed an obsession with time for most triathletes. Competitors do not only want to beat cumulative race times, but the results are published showing a multiple of split times. The women describe examples in the club where the discourse of technology in triathlon is aligned with a discourse of masculinity. My own observations heard a constant banter of masculine narrative discussing times, ‘splits’ (split times) and the latest gadget that were perceived to be ‘worth the investment’. In the running section an essential piece of equipment and crucial to safe practice, are good shoes that can reduce the risk of shin splints.

Individuals may gauge the effectiveness of a performance through comparisons that will draw heavily upon the props provided by clothing and equipment. Without cultural distinction there would be no demand for fashion. In triathlon a functional component sits alongside the symbolic discourse of fashion. The following evidence from my interview data and field notes can be used to explore ways that the women in the triathlon club interpret the symbolic value of triathlon clothing and equipment.

All the women perceive triathlon as an ‘image sport’. I then asked them to be specific as to what this means. Betty replied “*because it is all about the right sunglasses, the right shoes you wear, the latest swimsuit, the best bike, so I think it very much an image sport!*” Betty admits that she loves living the image of triathlon. As I discussed in Chapter Six, triathlon and its image became ingrained into Betty’s social world, not only did she train, but also her job was to promote triathlon events and to help host big events like the Ironman. She even admitted that she preferred to date triathletes. I received another somewhat animated reply from Sandy:

An image sport? God yes! Definitely! Posing, you know the shades, and the oh so nice kit, the Oakley this and the £3000 bike, (not quite sure why because most of them are ‘weekend warriors’) and do not do it for a living, yeah, I think that it is very um, ‘image conscious’ very image conscious. I have been to races where I have seen both sexes posing equally, so I think that it is ‘an equal

opportunity image' definitely! (Laughs). Definitely, definitely, ... Maybe it just attracts people that are posy!

Martha takes a contrasting view when she describes her negative feelings about the image of triathlon:

...that aspect actually turns me off. The races, with all the people with all their top notch gear, their top notch bikes and all geared up, that aspect of it does not interest me at all. That is the wealthy aspect of triathlons. 'I have bought a new bike for £1000 lets put it on the web so everyone can see it!' That aspect of triathlon probably pisses me off, ... some of these people I find quite sad, that all their money seems to go on triathlon goods - the best bike, the newest bike, the newest shoes, the best helmet, the best clothing, the best watch, the best everything! Maybe it is because they have nothing else in their lives but triathlons! Whereas I have a lot else to spend my money on! You go to races like and you have people like myself who for the race just throw on a T-shirt or put a make up belt for the number and who wear ordinary running shoes on the bike, and then you have people like Jackie who have shoes, but that is because she got her husband's bike and has not got to invest much money herself, because her husband invests all the money initially. And then you have got the likes of Sharon, who doesn't show off about it, but has a bike worth thousands of pounds. And for me it seems to be the difference between the elite and the winners of the age categories as opposed to people who are doing it for fun. ... The men are worse, the men are more poserish. It is a two tier image, yes you know very quickly who the potential winners of the races are, you know by who they are hanging out with who they are talking to, how they are talking, you know the people who are new generally by the gear that they have got, but there are always the anomalies, there are always those who have loads of gear but are not particularly good.

All of the women identified how equipment and clothing were both very important to the image of triathlon. There are many examples of bricolage (Levis-Strauss 1966) in triathlon. Bricolage is the process by which styles are created through the appropriation of objects from other cultural realms and fitted into a form of collage that generates new meaning for the objects (Hebdige 1979). During our dialogue Sandy told me that one such example of triathlon bricolage was the tattoo. She said that suddenly about 10 people in the club:

all developed these rather amazing tattoos around their upper arms about two years ago, the Celtic wedding bands thing – and it was a triathlon thing, and I notice now when I go to the races just how many people have actually got them.

It seemed that the beginners had constructed a frame of reference from what other more experienced triathletes were using and wearing at races. Martha, Louise, Sandy and Paula all realise that they do not meet the fashion standards demanded by the triathlon image. Martha uses clothing to differentiate herself from others and is clearly comfortable with her own choice of consumer goods (she even did her first triathlon on a 'shopper' bike (with a basket and a bell)). This discussion suggests, therefore, that there is a connection between experience and fashion confidence in triathlon. Martha is an experienced sportswoman who feels she does not need expensive clothing and equipment as a form of status, whereas a beginner like Jackie, who is already very self-conscious about her body feels very sensitive to the fashion display around her. Consumer goods for triathlon show two contrasting tendencies: adherence to and absorption in the club and triathlon culture (Jackie, Coach, Betty, Tina, Trish, Deirdre, Claire and eventually Sandy and Paula,) and individual differentiation and distinction from other club members (Sharon, Martha, Louise, Harriet). Martha and Louise's stories told how they resisted the dominant discourses surrounding equipment and clothing. Sharon and Harriet used equipment also to stand out from the rest. They were both sponsored and often got personalised clothing and equipment that no one else could buy.

Many of the women, however, were highly critical of those (men and women) who had all the gear but couldn't deliver an equally high quality performance with their bodies. In the culture of triathlon these people were nicknamed "*weekend warriors*" (Martha). Sandy also informed me of another fitting phrase that was commonly attached to these types of "*wannabe triathletes; all the gear, no idea*". Martha elaborated:

Jackie is probably a prime example of that. ... I actually felt quite sorry for Jackie, the fact that she went off and she bought two bikes worth about two thousand pounds each, shoes, another £70, with all the triathlon training gear, with her helmet, with her sunglasses, with her heart monitor and her bike monitor, what she didn't do was then invest any time or effort or money into learning about the sport. And for me it is the exact opposite, I would prefer to spend the money in learning how to do the sport better, rather than going and buying the equipment, and yes, a brand new bike might take a minute off your time but a training day on how to train better, might take 10 minutes off your time.

This section of our dialogue shows a number of elements of the materialisation of bodies and the construction of subjectivities. Martha illustrates a disparity between

the symbolic statement of equipment and clothing and the discourse of performance in the culture of triathlon. Martha clearly feels that beginners like Jackie too often try to “*buy their triathlete status*”. Jackie’s perception though was that she just wanted “*to fit in more*”. Ultimately, however, the right to the identity of *an active triathlete* has to be earned through the body and triathlon training. To gain respect from established triathletes who are dominant in the relations of power in the club, a person needs to produce a physical curriculum vitae to support their positional claims. I saw this as an opportunity to explore this theme further, as Sandy goes on to say:

It is the same whatever it is you do ...At the end of the day what you spend your income on has nothing to do with anything, ... I mean I have got a relatively mid-range bike (we bought the first bike between us and we have got another now). I was racing on the mountain bike and getting very frustrated and so we have bought one each now, but they were £500-£600 each, and I have met a lot of people, and take great joy in overtaking people on their £1000 Quintala Roo bikes, because, I don’t know, its –spend what you need to spend, ... People are out there to ‘get the edge’, if it takes 2 seconds off your time you need this particular pair of handlebars, you need that particular type of bike with those particular wheels. I have never seen a sport with so many gadgets involved, and even in cycling, there is not so much emphasis on having a certain type of wheel as there seems to be equivalent in triathlon. I think it is a quite clever marketing ploy as it makes you spend a bloody fortune! I am sure if you are doing it for a living you want to have a certain type of equipment because it can make difference between gold medal and silver, ... it is my hobby, I don’t think that I want to spend £3,000 on a bike, and yes I take great delight in overtaking people on very expensive bikes! I love it! It makes me feel really good! And my bike is not particularly good but you need to be good to do it. So, having all the gear doesn’t necessarily mean that you know what you are doing, it is just my impression, but there is, if you haven’t got the Oakley sunglasses and all the rest, and you haven’t got the Roo bike and the handmade wetsuit, and you haven’t got the three different types of kit bag, and a specific type of towel in transition, or you don’t put your shoes on in a certain way, it is just like ‘Oh, God!’ The first one I did I did in trainers on a mountain bike and I came 4th! So I thought, ‘sod it!’ It is ability. I got overtaken by someone on a mountain bike and a nice bike and beat lots of other people on very nice bikes so I think your physical ability is the most important not really the gear you do it on.

I asked Sandy whether she felt pressured by the attainment (this time in relation to material goods) discourse that she had described. Sandy replied:

Yes I do. I say that now, a year and a half down the line I have to quantify that I have got all the gear! (laughs) I have got the special cycling shoes and the wetsuit, ... why did I succumb? Peer pressure, wanting to beat the person who did beat me on the slightly better bike, who had proper shoes, and I was going to make a few minutes difference, I sat down and did some serious 'perusing' of the literature and talking to people who were things like cyclists, because the bike was going to be the expensive thing, and so when we decided to buy a bike, and I had actually raced using my mountain bike and got nowhere, and found myself out pedalling the bike, and that was quite frustrating and though to myself 'no, the bike needs to go' and then when we were looking to buy the bike we have got a friend who is cyclist who sat down and worked out what was cost effective and what wasn't, and then talking to a number of people that if you used cleats rather than slip ins you would actually go a bit quicker. Well I have to say it was a while before we got to those and when I first tried it I fell off several time because I couldn't get my shoes off! But I notice I cycle more quickly because of that, so that was a worthwhile investment, but it took about 6 months to get to that stage. And then, wet suit, I needed a wetsuit to do Swindon, to do an open water swim in Swindon, and the cheapest one I could get on the market and I got it because I entered Swindon, and I had entered Brighton, and to hire it would have cost me £40 each time and the wetsuit only cost me £150, so I thought even if I use it 3 times, it would be cost effective. But I am sure that it is just a rationalisation exercise, you play with yourself to have it 'oh no I have got a wetsuit'. I have no idea what I am going to get next, hopefully nothing actually! I have got it all now! So I have succumbed to the bike, the shoes, the wetsuit the tri-bars and I think that I am there now, I can't think of anything else I need to get!

Sandy and Paula (partners) started out with equipment that was functional and, at first, Sandy relished passing better bikes on her mountain bike. As their performances got better, however, so did their will to belong to the culture of triathlon and, therefore, to its image. Sandy bought goods that had symbolic approval. Sandy and Paula's house and shed are now littered with the latest triathlon gadgets, clothes and equipment that they perceive as symbolic of *real* triathletes. Equipment and clothing in triathlon although primarily functional, also construct (symbolic) identities around a triathlete that are based on a system of codes and rules which also includes ability.

Equally, knowledges of and experience in the use of specialist equipment become important benchmarks against which a woman is judged in triathlon. At the AGM (2000), the women brought up the point that many beginners cannot do all three

elements of triathlon but want to learn. Jackie said that she did not know how to ride a bike. She could sit on it and turn the pedals but she did not know how to race a bike. She was not road-wise. The first time she rode a bike properly was at one of the time trials (on a dual carriageway!) and it scared her to death. In the AGM the chairperson sniped *have you ever actually asked for help?* Jackie said no, because she “*did not want to look stupid*”. There are many techniques to learn in triathlon and specialist equipment is of no use unless women have the knowledge to use it. Sandy said:

I think that it is a good sport to be able to do, but I think that it needs to be a little less I suppose 'elitist'. It does need to be made slightly broader and slightly more welcoming. It can be very intimidating, the gadgets, the bikes and the 'techy talk' around bikes and transitions and waves and 'what did you do your transition one time in?' When I went to the training camp ... a couple of months ago some of the gadgets that some of the people had there I couldn't stop laughing, there were gadgets in gadgets that people had and I thought "what is the point of half of these things?"

Power relations in triathlon are dynamic, undergoing revision and change due to a variety of processes both in and outside the women's social worlds. It was clear from the data that the display of clothing, equipment and fashion played an important part in constructing gender power relations and power relations *between* women.

The media continue to use symbolic discourses (sporting but ladylike) with body images that are strongly sexualised or glamorous. My data shows how clothing can be seen both as a function of power and a technology of the self. Discourses of femininity have changed and contemporary culture values activity, but, society now aligns the toned slim athletic woman with the sexy woman. Triathlon clothing serves as a function of power as women are encouraged to wear skimpy figure hugging lycra that accentuates the body. Sandy, Paula, Martha, Jackie and Trish are conscious of their bodies and think triathlon clothing only looks good on slim toned and bulgeless figures. Paula said:

I do not think it is designed for the average woman's body shape, I'd like to say triathlon kit I found especially hard to get hold of. It is quite daunting because it is image conscious, I always chucked a T-shirt on when I was going on my cycle part of the race.

Discourses of attractiveness, femininity and sexuality have synchronicity (Bordo 1993) in triathlon culture. Sandy, Martha and Paula, however, show how they use

clothes to resist these and at every opportunity they throw on a baggy T-shirt to hide their skimpily clad bodies.

My next question was what is the role of the body in maintaining the women's subjectivities?

The discourses of performance and attainment: 'train, eat, work, train, eat, sleep'

It has been suggested that sport is socially constructed to celebrate attributes of power, speed and strength (historically symbols of masculinity) as values of sporting prowess (Hargreaves, 1994). Triathlon is a sport that is standardised in distances and times. Races are timed overall with various split times (for example the swim leg, the bike leg) and change-over times (for example how long it takes to get out of the pool, go through the transition area and start the bike leg). An obsession with *time* was evident in all the women's stories with the exception of Jackie. Each woman relied on a heart rate monitor to both regulate effort and time of their performances to the millisecond. They explain how to press tiny buttons at regular intervals in both races and training in order to constantly measure performance becomes automatic. Milliseconds act as a self-regulating panopticon and the women (except Jackie) all had incredible recall for remembering not only times of the race, but split-times too for particular courses. Time converts into status and social conversations often revolve around how many milliseconds faster individuals ran, biked or swam. As Jackie said:

So you get an impression there that triathlon is for people who are running away from something, or haven't got anything else! All they do is train and they compete, and then they talk about it! So they see themselves in terms of their latest times in triathlon. And is that very rewarding to spend a lot of time with? It need not be like that, because interesting people do do triathlon I am sure! But unfortunately this particular club tends to be dominated by that particular type of triathlete

Jackie's perception was that the majority of her peers have triathlon focused social worlds. Fast times and physical improvement are rewarded by the formally expressed discourses of the club (for example, the club has a monthly Improver Scheme). Shaving fractions of seconds off their personal best is an obsession for most women. On the poolside, in the changing rooms and at social events there is a constant masculinised banter of athletes asking each other 'what time did you do?'

For Jackie, Martha and Louise this constant ‘techy talk’ became very wearing as Jackie expresses:

*I am sick and tired about hearing how quick someone can cycle 10 miles, and swim 100m who gives a ...! It is very nice to hear when someone came first, lets have a couple of drinks to celebrate, but don't go **on** about it, what films do people like to watch ... what books are people interested in ...have you seen such and such on the telly? It would be nice, because that would mean that you had some other interests*

Jackie and Martha (both novices) commented upon the shallowness of certain members of the club. Jackie said:

I think that you are only valued as your ability as a triathlete. I think that I have felt that I am not perceived to have value because I haven't been a brilliant triathlete yet, whether or not I will be better in the future, but I feel my value, my defining qualities in that club have been my triathlon ability, when I have run marathons, I am a barrister, you know I am a person!

Martha told a story of a time in her social world when she had to put triathlon “*on the back burner*”. She mentioned her lack of time to train to Harriet and 5 other men who were horrified that she had not given up the *other* things to make time for training, rather than the other way around. Martha said:

the club wouldn't understand that,... if you can't train, you haven't got time to train, well then give up everything else – and train!

This shows how the dominant discourse of the club which Martha suggests centres on performance, only sees the isolated functional or dysfunctional woman's body, ignoring the social, gendered, holistic individual. If the woman's body is ‘functional’ then it should train. Such dominant discourses normalise woman members to believe that a *real* triathlete puts triathlon and training as the pinnacle of their lives and frowns on those (like Martha and Jackie) that do not or will not centralise it.

For the dedicated, often obsessive triathlete, triathlon participation is a way of life. It dictates their leisure time, their work time, their choice of career, and even where they live. Betty for example, went to the extreme to maintain her aspired subjectivities in triathlon. During the research, she spent 10 months in Australia specifically in Cronula because that part of Sydney is known as the centre of triathlon culture. She lived with her new partner (an elite triathlete) whom she met whilst working on an Ironman competition. In Australia, she tells how she “*lived*

triathlon” adopting the ritualistic regime of ‘train, eat, work, train, eat, sleep’ in a repetitive cycle.

I’ll give you a time when I was actually training in Cronula ...a standard day, go out on your bike for a 2 maybe 3 hour ride, come back you’d eat rest a couple of hours, go for a run and then go squad (swim) training. The bike distance would be anything between 50-80km, your running would be three different distances, you would do a speed run, a middle distance and a long distance, a long distance being anything up to an hours running. And the swimming you would normally do all that in swim squad, 5 maybe 6 times a week, swimming is something that you need to keep up as you know and that would be between 2.5 and 3km per day. So your total distances over a week would be 250 - 300 km training on a bike, 20-30km running, and 12-15km in the pool. That is training full time ...

Betty’s story tells how she is motivated “*just for the fact I love training*”. Betty’s extreme training was a practice that allowed her to maintain her subjectivities of a triathlete and to be accepted in the triathlon culture.

Lloyd (1996) argues the technologies of the self can only turn into feminist alternate politics under two conditions. They have to involve a critical attitude, and an act of self-stylisation (Markula 2003). Betty tells how at 18 she made a conscious decision to escape from Wales and the dominant discourses of her childhood (discourse of femininity; specifically discourses of domesticity and reproduction, through the asymmetrical power relations of patriarchy). She was driven by her determination not to “*end up like my mother*” (married young, 4 children, never worked, and never been abroad). It could be argued triathlon is Betty’s technology of the self. She immersed herself in the triathlon culture and was conscious that by adopting its practices, she could transform herself into what she now describes as an “*independent, professional ... free to do what I want... strong, powerful sportswoman*”.

Deirdre describes the competitive environment that she encountered when she first went to the club swim session: “*they all looked so fit! I had to totally redefine what I thought was swimming!*” Deirdre admits that she made a pact with herself the first night to do “*whatever it takes to be just like them*”. In her personal diary she tells how she is not happy if she is not maintaining a subjectivity in triathlon as “*one of the boys*”. Hargreaves (1994) argues women who play alongside men in sport have constantly to negotiate their status in traditional cultural contexts of men’s power

and privilege, and in general discourses of femininity, patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality. Discourses and operations of power have constructed certain knowledge and truth about women's bodies. For example, medical language has constructed women's bodies as dysfunctional, thwarted with women's illnesses, disorders and syndromes, and incapable of strenuous physical activity. Power-knowledge discourses of gender play a significant role in the construction of the women's subjectivity as inferior to male subjectivity. In the club, power through language and the discourse of performance has constructed the term *honorary boy*. As it was seen in Chapter Six, the data showed that women were forming alternate language (they think of themselves, as *triathletes*, and *active triathletes* are other women who race) and the term *honorary boy* was devised by the women for women. Women position themselves and refer to other women as *honorary boys* if they perceive they, or another triathlete is good enough to train with the men. It could be argued that being an *honorary boy* is perpetuating a masculinised standard in triathlon based on the discourse of performance being based on the fastest men. Why did the women select a term that is masculine? The term implies that it is an honour for the women to be performing at the same level as the men. It could also be deconstructed as a term that implies that by being a *honorary boy* as opposed to a *honorary man*, the women are still not quite there in terms of physicality. An alternate reading, however, sees a *honorary boy* as woman that is empowered through triathlon and one who has agency to transform herself to a new level. It may be argued that these women use language differently in order to challenge normalisation, coherence, totality, and equilibrium in our culture.

The attainment and performance discourses that drive many of the women to maintain a masculinised standard are too strong for them to ignore. Only when Deirdre is doing over and above the expected norm does she feel she is doing her best, and revels in the respect of her peers and family. Performance discourses become *dangerous* when they are *so* dominant in many of the women's social worlds (Sharon, Harriet, Betty, Deirdre, Tina, Trish) that they channel the women to believe that they must follow arduous training practices in order to maintain their subjectivities.

Deirdre could clearly identify what behaviour patterns were involved in order to maintain her subjectivities. She says:

time, dedication, hard work, commitment, a degree of effort and energy that I know is more than 'the norm' working hard, training hard, but also doing some of the 'little' things that others may not, to help a friend, colleague, family or neighbour, and show you care

Deirdre describes her *extreme* effort and her pressured lifestyle as integral to the maintenance of her sense of self. She lives day to day, she feels she would be nothing without operating at this extreme level:

in terms of how I do drive myself, how hard I work both at work and in my training because I do, I laugh at myself occasionally and I certainly sort of question why on earth I drive myself to the limits I do, what it is I'm trying to prove and to whom. All I do know is it is very much my own standards that I strive towards and I constantly, um you know, upgrade those I guess as I go through life and any activity sort of thing, um, that I do set myself harder and harder goals ...

Deirdre perceives herself as a perfectionist. Everything she undertakes must be perfect so that there is no room for criticism. So is Deirdre's perfectionism a coping strategy, or a conscious practice that she employs to counter her residual feeling of being "*out of control*" at home in a patriarchal discourse of power? Deirdre sets out to be the most dedicated to give always more than the norm. In line with Bordo (1993) these obsessions are not bizarre or anomalous, but rather are the 'logical (if extreme) manifestations of anxieties and fantasies fostered by our culture' (p. 15). At work or out training Deirdre feels that she constantly has to prove to herself and others that she is the best. She, however, is critically aware of how her extreme behaviours can help her transgress her childhood feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. The practices as freedom (Foucault 1978/1976) she employs, as a perfectionist, empower her and allow her to counter dominant gender power relations. Transforming her body and controlling her eating are two areas where Deirdre feels she alone 'wields total control' (Bordo 1993). This is in line with Bordo's (1993) second axis of continuity; the control axis, where the woman feels 'hooked on the intoxicating feeling of accomplishment and control' (p. 148).

Harriet and Sharon both describe similar arduous training regimes, involved in maintaining the subjectivity of *an elite triathlete*. The difference in theirs and Deirdre's stories, however, is that Deirdre is an intermediate triathlete who has no coach writing her programmes or pushing her to these extremes. She is self-driven.

Harriet describes a typical training week in 1995 at a time when we have already seen that to be a winner, training and races were her strongest subjectivities:

A: *So when you were at university you said that you trained three times a day, was that everyday?*

H: *Yes, I got a rest day on Saturday when I only had to go for a run!*

A: *So how many hours would that take?*

H: *It was approximately an hour session in each, so three hours a day.*

In our dialogue I asked what motivated her to train so hard and unhesitatingly she said “*the winning, there is no point in taking part if you are not going to win*”. Harriet sets herself even higher goals than Deirdre who was looking for faster personal bests. Harriet, however, was not happy unless she had won the race. Sharon, who was the only fulltime triathlete, described her training and racing schedule:

I train like 5 or 6 hours a day, in the winter I have like I have 2 months in South Africa.... April I was in Japan and Australia racing, and then I have a three week camp in France, and then I am away a lot of weekends in between that racing.

I train 6 times a week sometimes 7, sometimes, every other week I usually have a whole day off, or maybe just go swimming, but Monday through Friday I swim in the mornings – Monday, Wednesday and Friday I swim half five until half seven with a club, and the other mornings I swim half seven until 9am just in a public session, and then sometimes I swim on a Sunday night, and then when I come home that is the swimming done which is really good, and then on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, straight away I will do another session, either an hours hard running session which may have some repetitions in or on my turbo trainer on my bike, which is like stationary upstairs, I do a hard session working on my heart rate, and maybe two of those a week. And straight after that I go into town and I go to a gym near where I used to work which has a really good circuit class, and then I do an hours circuit and then a half an hours weights. And then half an hours stretching. And I usually get home about half four, feeling pretty knackered! And the Tuesday and Thursday I don't go into the gym and I do longer, easier stuff, like I may do a three hour bike ride in the morning, and then do an hours run in the afternoon. And then on a Saturday, I don't swim in the morning, I just get up and do like an hour and a half's running session, and hours bike, or a two hour bike, and the same on Sunday. So it is usually about 30 hours a week of training, plus all the driving back and to and things.

Sharon's strict training routine takes up most of her day and impacts on her evenings and her whole social world. She acknowledges that many relationships have broken up over such issues, however, she and her husband have set the Olympics as a short-term goal. Sandy is only a novice triathlete but her typical training week is gruelling. She explains:

I will swim three times a week now, and run certainly for 4 or 5 times, the cycling is a bit hopeless but that is about twice. So if you add all that up that is more sessions than there are days in the week so there are one or two days that I will do two sessions a day, invariably get up in the morning and go swimming before I go to work, run at lunch time, or, depending on how tired I am when I wake in the morning go running at lunchtime and then either cycle or swim in the evening. I like to do something everyday I have to say and if I don't then I begin to get a bit twitchy, unless it is a 'designated rest day'.

All of the women except Claire described how they felt intense agitation (Bordo 1993) on the days when they could not train. The thought of having a few days off filled Deirdre with horror. Martha said "*I go mad if I haven't ran or done something for three or four days I just get (pause) irritable ... I just start getting really restless*". Tina also realises that her behaviour changes at home if she cannot train:

I may be a bit of a bear with a sore head I should think, I might be a bit snappy, but I think that I would, do realise it. ... I might shout and scream a bit! And then I suddenly think oh, I've been a bit snappy there, that's a bit naughty

Mood change due to a short withdrawal of exercise may be the first sign that some of the women's exercise programmes are ritualistic. Bordo (1993) suggests that compulsive exercisers are often perfectionists who put an emphasis on control and have little regard for their health. Existing research on compulsive exercise however, tends not to consider the power relations that surround it and fails to consider the woman who is surreptitiously exercising behind closed doors (Bordo 1993). Ritualistic training is based on the feeling of accomplishment and total authority over one's body. As Betty's story shows:

I am a very organised person, it is a case, when you are training you are in control of what you are doing basically, when you are training you are in control of how good you can be, you are in control of your times

Bordo's (1993) concept 'synchronicity' has relevance for triathlon where other components of cultural forms and practices, for example, power relations, body

image, attractiveness and femininity occur. For example, in triathlon clothing, discourses of femininity; attractiveness, idealised body image; and the discourse of performance (having a wet suit improves performance in cold water) both have synchronicity in the swim leg of the race. Harriet, Sharon, Betty, Tina, and Deirdre's stories reveal that pushing themselves to the extreme is about being in total control of their bodies. Betty says:

I am much more in control of my life, when I am training. You have got something that you are specifically aiming to do, you feel good, your body feels good, you feel fit, you can eat what you want! I don't know you feel that you are just working yourself, you are not being lazy, glutinous, and just drifting along. You have got control of what you are doing, you have got that direction in your life.

Deirdre, Betty, Sharon, Harriet, Trish, Tina and Jackie's stories tell how they often drive themselves to believe that they can overcome all physical obstacles, and how they thrive on pushing their bodies to new limits. Consciously, many of the women are moving their goals to make their bodies go faster for longer. In order to achieve their goals masculinised behaviours and practices have become normalised into their daily routines. Trish who, at 26, did *no* sport now tells how:

the summer of 97 I did the 'End to End' – Lands End to John O'Groats on my bike, ... over 2 weeks. ...averaging 72 miles a day for a fortnight. Actually my aim what I am aiming to do for this year s to do the Paris, Brest, Paris (PBP). It is what long – distance cyclists aspire to, because it is 12,000km without stopping. So it is about, it is a 90-hour limit.

Deirdre prefers to train with men and openly celebrates that she is one of the boys in the triathlon club and at work. She strives for a personal best (PB) in a race, but one PB is not enough. Deirdre then drives herself to achieve that time in at least 2 more races she then makes the goal a few seconds faster. Deirdre said:

I'm someone who, if I race it's with a personal best in mind and I don't feel able to enter a race for the sake of just going through the motions. If I'm entering the race I am going flat out, I am putting myself totally on the line. I'm going to push myself to the limits and I'm not interested in entering a race if I'm not in a state of fitness to be able to do that. ... I'd then been looking to follow it with an equal performance in a race in say two, three weeks time to try and register that I have reached that new level and what I haven't acknowledged is that I think that I'm someone who, having pushed so hard in both training, leading up to the race, and the race itself, certainly needs that period of recovery before I start off again. ...I

think as I say that that has been my major mistake in the past, and I've had sort of significant injury problems as a consequence. I think that my experiences are more of sort of over-training syndrome type problems that have related to a period following sort of sustained, hard training but also a period where I was certainly not getting rest or relaxation from work either

Deirdre's story shows how she feels empowered through her practices of triathlon, however, Deirdre also articulates 'a consciously planned and critical resistance against the dominant discourses of sport' (Markula 2003, p. 103). It could be argued that Deirdre critically uses the practices of triathlon to counter the dominant discourses of power (patriarchy, institutionalised power, gender power relations). Deirdre folded the outside forces and transformed herself through physical activity (Markula 2003, Castelnovo and Guthrie 1998). She uses masculinised practices and the physicality of her body to provoke 'a critical, querying reaction' (Lloyd 1996, p. 258). She is constantly troubling the discourse of femininity by challenging gendered assumptions of women's subject position in sport and the workplace.

Louise, a novice triathlete, perceives that certain women in the club are under enormous pressures of performance; to firstly *gain* status and then to *keep* the status they have trained so hard to 'earn'. She says:

once you have reached your 'status' you have got to hang on to it because they will be very dismissive of you if you fall away from it, whereas I think a lot of men reach their status and if they move back into the middle lane or they just have an off day it is nothing they are 'just having an off day' whereas I think women if they get to that level they have to try really hard to stay there mainly, I don't know whether it is male pressure on them or their own pressure on them to do it – probably the latter actually, you know 'I have worked bloody hard to get here and I am going to stay here because I don't want any of you lot pointing the finger and saying oh it is because she is female! Or oh it is the time of the month' (which is their usual bloody excuse!)

Elite women triathletes especially are under *constant* pressure to keep at the top, and in this battle to succeed, they run the risk of outcomes that may be damaging to their health (over training, cutting down on their weight). In our discussion on the materialisation of the women's body in triathlon Sharon make some important points:

I think that triathlon is healthier because if you look at especially at say World Cup races, at the good people, there are all shapes and sizes because you've got to be, you can't be really skinny, the

really skinny girls aren't good swimmers often, you know they have got no power and even on the bike you know you need muscle, you can't just be really skinny.

Despite this version of knowledge that triathlon needs power and strength, all the women's stories (except Paula and Sandy) revealed controlled eating. Betty and Deirdre's diaries were littered with alternate knowledges and truths about their body in triathlon. Training to become faster was rationalised through a low fat diet to reduce body fat and excess weight. They described intense personal battles that centred on the interrelationships of training with food. Deirdre explains:

for me eating is very firmly linked to training, and to 'earning the right to eat'. ...I feel guilty about eating if I haven't trained you know and eating is firmly geared – eating follows training, and that is just a cycle that I'm locked in ... the key thing for me is ... I feel guilty about eating what would be considered 'normal', a 'normal eating pattern' and I'd feel guilty following that

Betty's story shows a similar trend:

A: *So look back to that period when you were not training so much, what was your relationship to your diet and food? How do you feel?*

B: *I feel fat, unhappy, lazy, completely obsessed with what I eat, guilty if I eat, I suppose it is a unhealthy mental attitude actually. I feel unhealthy, I feel.... I suppose if you analyse it is a connection between eating too much food and if you don't exercise you can get fat. Your muscle tone goes and you don't feel as good, you haven't got as much energy to do things. ... I think it controls my life an awful lot. If I don't exercise I don't feel as if I am in control of anything I feel dreadful.*

Their disciplined behaviour signifies self-control yet Deirdre and Betty also recognise an obsessiveness that may indicate a gradual loss of that control. As Deirdre says:

I can see a 'power' of influences over attitudes and rationality that does 'get a grip' on you, so that you are arguably no longer in control ... awareness is certainly a critical first step ... awareness alone ...isn't going to change anything...

As Bordo (1993) suggests 'young girls begin early in learning to control their weight ... as part of the obscure, eternal arsenal of feminine arts to be passed from generation to generation (p. 9). Harriet's story told how girls as young as 14 at her old running club viewed dieting as 'normal' even when running long distances. Harriet described how she too got pressurised into controlled patterns of eating:

When I was at my running club there was a lot of anorexic girls down there, and you just fell into the same trap. Not the same as them but it is always at the back of your mind because they were constantly saying, it was constantly around you “oh you shouldn’t eat that you will get fat” and when you were 14 was just hearing this all the time. I went on the odd slim-fast for ages, and....., and it got to a stage that I just kept passing out...

The young women were at a very impressionable age and are prisoners to fashion and to media images of the body beautiful (Hargreaves 1994) which construct a ‘tyranny of slenderness’ (Chernin 1986). I argue that in this particular case running acted as a technology of power (Foucault 1997/1984) for these young women. The young women self regulated by limiting food intake and by increasing running output. Dominant discourses of attractiveness and femininity of contemporary society materialised their bodies into slender bodies. As Bordo (1993) argues, however, the discourse of women’s slenderness suggests ‘powerlessness in one context ... autonomy and freedom in the next’ (p. 26). Harriet and her friends celebrate and felt good from losing weight and were oblivious of any negative outcomes or serious health risks from their actions.

Trish tells how she also devised very controlled patterns of eating:

When I was a teenager I think that I was more or less anorexic, ... we had a cooked school dinner I used to hardly eat any of that, and then at tea time again I just ate minimum that I could get by without mum really noticing. I remember one type of tea. We had those ‘club’ biscuits and I wanted to eat mine, but I was just so afraid of getting fat eating this one that sort of gave it to my brother, one of my brothers! I was pretty skinny and so on; I was almost anorexic then.

Claire is a teenager and although her own story does not reveal any concerns, she says at her school:

most girls diet, diet, diet and end up like a bag of bones and skin because the weight that they haven’t lost they haven’t toned, so it doesn’t look that much better anyway. There are quite a few of girls at our school that are on diets ...

I asked Sharon whether she had ever dieted and she replied:

Yeah ...(Laughs, uncertainly) definitely! When I was a runner when I was about 16. I was really skinny when I was younger when I was swimmer, and then when I started running, running like track running ... long distance is full of really skinny girls and I think I got a couple of injuries (I think that started it off) and I put on a bit of weight and also I was at that age I was putting on a

bit of weight and so I did eat really badly for about 2 years, just had nothing with fat in. I was at boarding school and they only had full fat milk, so then I just did not have any milk for 2 years! And I got loads of stress fractures and they don't know if it was kind of to do with not having calcium, or vitamin D and I had like 3 or 4 stress fractures in my legs in 3 years! Um, and you know I was, I wasn't really skinny either, I did go quite skinny, I don't think that I was ever really bad, but considering how hard I was training, you know I probably was not doing myself a lot of good. ...I must have had to be strong mentally because it must have been killing me! To do the running I was doing on the kind of diet I was doing, I mean it must just have been really willpower, willpower

To eat in such a controlled manner at a time when her body was still growing may have caused Sharon irreparable damage. As we saw in Chapter Six her life has been plagued with injuries especially shin splints, which may be linked to her training regimes and lack of calcium over a six year period at school. Many of the women have experienced being driven to what others might call irrational behaviours, of being unable to choose the sensible and nourishing options even if they recognise it. As Bordo (1993) states 'fat, not appetite or desire, became the declared enemy' (p. 185). In Sharon's case the fear of the whole milk adding a few pounds outweighed her rational knowledge that calcium was a requirement for healthy bones. She rationalised what she was doing by needing to keep her weight down to be like the other girls.

Sharon and Deirdre both were concerned over the effect of 'throw away comments' from what they term "*insensitive men coaches*". As Sharon said:

coaches are pretty crap ... as soon as you are look a bit heavy they will say "you are carrying a few extra pounds" And it is so true but there is such a fine dividing line you know that can really tip people over, unless it is carefully monitored then the girls are just convinced that they are too fat
... I think that male coaches are a lot less aware of how women think, you know about their weight, and it is different for guys and girls and so I think that male coaches don't quite understand that if they say one comment it could lead to a lot of mental stress you know, ... like "Oh my god I am fat!" which will lead onto something worse.

Coach tells a story of how she overheard such a comment and of the consequences that followed. She said:

I know a situation where a male coach said to somebody 'you need to lose 10 pounds' ... purely just a throw away comment it was, 'if you lost 10lb just think how much faster you would go!'

I was actually on an International training camp when that comment was made, and I was absolutely disgusted to see; I mean that person, she was a young women, she wasn't even mature really ... we were on a two week training camp and she was trying to survive on nothing absolutely nothing like a cream cracker, or a Weetabix. And you are doing three sometimes four sessions a day! She felt that was sufficient and wondering why you know she was passing out, and being violently ill. But yes, you need to be extremely careful with females, we never encourage them to weigh themselves consistently, what we would always say is try a measurement test rather than a weight test

A: what happened to that athlete?

C: She actually gave up 6 months later.

My research diary recounts a meeting that discusses the effect that a throwaway comment can have on susceptible women:

I had a meeting with Deirdre today and the conversation turned to a personal experience that happened to her that week. We were talking eating patterns and how often they are spurred on by flippant 'throw away' comments' that somebody throws in without thinking much about it and obviously not considering the possible consequences. It was at a swimming training night at her club, and she was chatting to a man about the season ahead, and he asked her what her race plans were. She replied that she was dipping out competitively this season as she had other commitments of a new job on the horizon, and that she had to prioritise. He came back with a comment that literally stabbed her with a knife – “*So, you are just going to do nothing and get fat!*” – she was devastated and said “*I tried to laugh it off, but all I wanted to know was if he therefore thought that I was looking fatter recently in my costume!*” It was something that has obviously been on her mind ever since, although I expect that he has forgotten that he ever said it.

Deirdre certainly did not forget and she intensified her a cycle of 'calories in versus the calories out'. As my observation diary shows the eating-training roundabout Deirdre is locked onto is based on a reward system:

certain foods she just could not bring herself to eat, or she would then be guilt ridden. For example, she loves apple pie but because she thinks that she looks a bit heavy now she is not training (only once a day) she cannot justify having some although she admits that she would dearly love some. It is not until she has had a real physically hard day that she will let herself have a piece of carrot cake for example – it is almost like giving herself a reward for pushing so hard.

These feelings show how Deirdre's dietary regime, the rigours of the constant physical activity and the pain of numerous other complications are accepted because of the drive to control her own body (Bordo 1993, p. 149). As she agrees:

control and self-discipline are definitely key factors in all of this. Just sticking to training programmes, I ... felt satisfaction in being able to say 'no' to certain foods, to discipline myself into the attitude that these were things I 'didn't eat'. A part of this is to be regarded as 'healthy', has a 'healthy lifestyle' and the association with this of avoiding fat and sweet foods.

So why don't the women's bodies rebel against the pain, semi-starvation, constantly being cold and headaches. Deirdre describes how she feels hungry all the time, how her body is screaming for fuel, but how she feels empowered when she can make the choices that demand maximum will power:

Sometimes when I have felt hungry I have even had second thoughts about having a banana. At the back of my mind and nagging me has been the knowledge that its fat content is higher than other fruits, so an apple would really be a better choice ... Invariably I refrain and choose the apple...

The women feel they can no longer control events outside themselves but they can control their training regimes the food they eat and how far they run, swim or bike. In many of the women's stories there was a strong sense of self. They believed that they were free to become what they wanted even though they knew the dangers. Deirdre explains how the train to eat cycle works:

Lunchtime is probably a time when I find it difficult to eat from a psychological point of view. ... Because, it is linked to training I guess, like if I train first thing then I'll have a good breakfast, and that sort of follows, and then if I am training later on, one I don't like a big meal, because I can't train on food very well. ... so I normally eat after I have trained, um and if I am not eating in the middle of the day then I feel guilty about not training anyway... But then I have had breakfast, the concept of two meals without training is quite problematic! Like today, after the film I went swimming, and so then I smiled, I did not feel bad about having a roll, you know a cottage cheese and salad roll, and but I would not have felt happy eating that if I had come straight from the film, and hadn't done any exercise in between

Drinkwater et al. (1995) and Drinkwater et al. (1991) suggest that the adverse health consequences of 'low bodyweight in athletes predisposes women to amenorrhoea and irreversible bone loss as well as susceptibility to stress fractures'

(Garner, Rosen & Barry, 1998, p. 845). Discourses surrounding women's reproductive embodiment have historically oppressed women. One topic that has often been used to marginalise women in sport is the discourse surrounding menstruation.

The menstruating woman is considered the norm and is valued in our society however, my data found that *all* of the women had experienced irregular periods at some point in their lives and some (Deirdre, Betty, Tina, Sharon, Martha) had no period for between 4 months to 10 years. Severe deviations that are categorised medically as *amenorrhoea* are defined as *disorders* or *syndromes* and are social signals that warn of a dysfunctional woman. In line with Bordo (1993), however, the women welcomed amenorrhoea and saw at it as a positive relief in their lifestyle. Betty, Martha and Deirdre saw the lack of periods as an empowering experience. Harriet admitted that she experienced amenorrhoea for most of her adolescent years and well into her twenties:

When I was running, when I was younger yes. It used to be brilliant I used to say, "I haven't been on for over 100 days!" I used to tick off the months and say "Yeah!" This was up until I was about 18 or 19 and then I went to university and started to do triathlon and so I suppose, yes it was still the same really... but when I was younger it was great, great! We used to have competitions in our running group as to who hadn't had it for the longest! We were like "Yeah!" It was excellent; you could go for months and months ...

Although Harriet did not consciously stop her periods, she consciously chose not to go to the doctors to reinstate them. She enjoyed resisting the discourse of womanhood and experienced empowerment through her body. Coach's story also told how prevalent these issues are with young women triathletes:

when we were coaching the National squad there were a number of athletes who were going through those severe problems, ... we actually had the medical officer down and he was doing a talk to the athletes on this and afterwards a number of the athletes approached both ----- and I and said that 'we seriously think that we have got a problem'. Um, it is still a very 'taboo' subject, to cover and it is surprising that athletes of that level really don't know their own bodies, because one of the girls in particular had not had a period for something like 5 years! ... she had absolutely no idea of the consequences of what was happening to her body! ... and had absolutely no idea at all with regards to anything, osteoporosis or

Tina and Sharon also tell their stories of how their periods stopped: Tina said:

Yes, they stopped. Yes, for about 4 months, when I was twenty. This was when I did my best marathon time actually, 26, 26/27, but I was also in a job that I really hated as well and I was doing loads of running because I was doing a job that I hated and I think that it was all probably related.

Sharon said:

when I was about 20 I had really irregular periods up until then and I went to the doctor just to talk about it and I was told to go on the pill, to help and that is what some other athletes are encouraged to do,

Deirdre tells of her experience at her local doctors:

*“do you have regular periods?” and I smiled and I said “no, I have not had any since 1990!”
this new doctor ... had obviously seen me in 1994/5 when I had not had any periods for 5 years! And now it was like 9/ 10 years! So she was actually very concerned, and wanted to follow this up with me and so she sort of said “I think that we need to address this and the long term implications” ...but that she also wanted to arrange for me to go for a scan, because she was concerned about that long period of amenorrhoea I think. ... and that my oestrogen levels were very low which she expected given the history ... then we arranged for the bone scan and I should get the results of that next week.*

Clinically, an ‘eating disorder’ is considered a mental illness that refers to a spectrum of abnormal eating patterns ranging from atypical behaviours to gross disturbances. Deirdre’s story told how the doctor weighed her and then measured her against a weight-height chart:

by her scales I am drastically underweight for my height! They come out with some completely ridiculous thing like she told me that I should be 62 kilos, or something. ... You know I am like 50! (Laughs) You know, and you just think “Oh my God!” she wants me to put on 12 kilos!

This is an example of the discourses of medicine and science framing the woman as dysfunctional and labelling her with an *illness* that emphasises the human frailties of an otherwise physically strong and powerful female athlete. Discourses of eating arise out of normalising feminine practices of our culture, ‘practices which train the female body in docility and obedience to cultural demands while at the same time being *experienced* in terms of power and control’ (Bordo 1993, p. 27).

A few of the women were losing weight, running faster, feeling powerful but ironically maybe also becoming fragile. There is some evidence (Drinkwater et al. 1990, Otis et al. 1997) that the prolonged cessation of periods may, in fact, be unhealthy and may lead to osteoporosis. In line with Sherlock (1997) and Sherlock and Swaine (1995) my study challenges the status quo and medical approaches that simply treat the established osteoporosis. Deirdre has already had three bone scans and between the first two there was a dramatic reduction in bone density; a 9% drop over a 2 year period. Deirdre described this as a time when she was training very hard. She then was prescribed hormone replacement for 6 months and her bone density stabilised to the level it was on the second scan. Deirdre said, *“I didn’t like how I felt during the treatment and it was me that chose to come off the treatment”*.

My data show that there is a fine line between sport practices that are *healthy* for you and sport practices that are *unhealthy*. At the time when Deirdre’s body was very *unhealthy*, and her bone density was the lowest, she ironically felt powerful and empowered when she was triathlon training:

We were out there cycling about 7 hours! (Laughs) When you are capable of doing something like that there is such a contradiction with the notion of illness, and that is still hard to get your head round. So, you know you are that fit, but the difference between fitness and health is the ... you know someone can be very very fit but quite unhealthy.

Deirdre is not a projection of her inside but rather an interiorisation of the outside. This suggests that she has folded the outside forces (dimensions of truth and power) and relates them back to herself (Foucault 1997/1984). Deirdre has transformed herself as *“lean, mean and powerful”* even when the language of medicine constructed her as frail, ill and at risk. As Frankenberg (1995) argues, the importance of a way of life is fundamental to a person’s being. For Deirdre to change her subjectivities in triathlon, to avoid the risks of osteoporosis and other health issues would be as life threatening to her as having osteoporosis itself. Without triathlon, Deirdre would lose her subjectivities, big sections of her social world and the person that she craves to be. To Deirdre, her lifestyle is based upon risk management that is non-negotiable. Triathlon can be seen as a strategy of resistance, a technology of the self, (Foucault 1997/1984) which ultimately becomes her own prison.

With a few exceptions (Bordo, 1993, Nasser, 1997, MacSween, 1993, Sherlock, 1997) the existing sport related literature clearly illustrates that society is not

accustomed to think of what have been labelled mental illnesses, as feminist political issues, or as socio-cultural products. The majority of existing theories seek a single cause and few claim that a multiplicity of factors may be involved in the understanding of 'eating disorders', amenorrhoea and osteoporosis as social phenomena. A poststructural feminist approach indicates that there is a multiplicity of discourses and explanations rather than rooting the sole cause in the dysfunctional woman's body.

My findings show how all of the women have multiple subjectivities which make up their sense of self and their social worlds. In the relationship between truth, self and power, Foucault (1988) argues that power both subjugates *and* makes subject to (Markula 2003). Each woman gives examples of the cultural practice she consciously employs to maintain her subjectivities.

Many of the women already maintain rigid, ritualistic training routines and all except Martha are entrenched in the discourses of performance and attainment. Deirdre, Betty Sharon and Trish all follow rituals of controlled eating and they plus Martha, Tina and Jackie have all experienced amenorrhoea. Betty and Deirdre are both locked into an eating-training cycle that is based on total control over their bodies using guilt to control and food as a reward. Deirdre is the only woman who has a confirmed low bone density.

My data suggests that triathlon practices function both as technology of power and they operate transgressively as a technology of the self. Triathlon practices can be technologies of power. The woman's body for example, is open for the gaze (Hargreaves 1994) in skimpy tight triathlon clothing. Emphasis on a semi-clothed woman perpetuates the discourse of sexiness, attractiveness, femininity and the quest for the ideal body. Some of the women's voices however, convey a 'consciously planned, critical resistance' to dominant discourses (Markula 2003, p. 103). Through triathlon technologies many of the women began to recognise themselves as subjects and in this sense they could be understood to counter the technologies of power. I suggest that Deirdre, Betty, Paula, Sandy, Martha and Jackie all have critical self-awareness that led to transgressive practices and self-stylisation. I suggest that triathlon is these women's technology of the self (Foucault 1997/1984).

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Over three years I have listened to 13 women triathletes talk about their lives and experiences of a triathlon club, whilst joining them in swimming training, at meets and social events. I am one of them. One of my primary aims was to give the women voice to tell their own stories and give their own versions of knowledges and truths. From the women's stories it is clear just how individual the women are. Other data indicates that the creation of knowledges and truths in the national governing body for triathlon (BTA) now acknowledges women's position in sport and the dominant discourses in the BTA endeavour to promote equity. The organisational practices of the BTA have created various spaces in the organisation in which women have voice. The youthful nature of an organisation such as the BTA appears to be a factor in developing equitable discourses.

One of the aims of this study was to analyse the dominant discourses (all immersed in power relations) associated with the women's sporting practices. These emerged from interviews and field notes as being: the discourses of performance (discourse of attainment and success, winning, often aligned with the discourse of masculinity); the discourses of femininity (discourse of reproduction and the discourse of domesticity, discourses of attractiveness and sexualisation) and the discourse of patriarchy (based upon asymmetrical gender power relations in favour of men).

During the three years I was observing the triathlon club I was part of a notable shift in gender-power relations, knowledges and truths in the organisation. By 2001, women's participation figures had increased threefold but most importantly the club formally acknowledged women through its introduction of initiatives that created spaces in which women's marginalised voices could be heard. There were, however, also examples of reverse resistance (Foucault 1978/1976) which were practices where women's subjectivities were constructed or constrained by residual discourses of femininity, specifically domesticity. There were many examples in the formal organisation of club histories where the sportswoman, as a subject, was active in the negotiation of discursive practices, challenging, resisting and transforming herself whilst creating new agency for her body (Bordo 1993). Such practices of women's resistance as freedom (Foucault 1997/1984, p.167) were also seen when individuals worked together (for example at the AGM (2000)) and gained legitimacy through the creation of alternate forms of discourse; power; knowledges and truths.

The women linked the sport of triathlon with discourses of health, youth, femininity, style, empowerment and sociability. The collective reasons for joining the club were: belonging, pride, support, social, reinforcement of subjectivities and fun.

I gave each woman space to speak in their own words so in line with feminist ethnographic methodologies the women themselves were setting the agenda to talk about what was important to them.

I argue through my theoretical framework that the construction of histories subjugates women and materialises their bodies through language and discourses of femininity and relations of power. As themes emerged and with each example the women gave me, I was constantly asking where is the relational power? Only then could I go on to analyse other discourses that were being maintained through power relations.

My data give real examples of real women who have tuned into a discourse of being physically active and thus resisting discourses of femininity. All of the 13 women individually articulated moments of empowerment they had experienced through triathlon practices. One of the most important points that emerged, however, was the way some women used triathlon consciously as a tool for self-development. Some of the women (Deirdre, Betty, Jackie, and Harriet) began to realise that they *can* be subjects. Individually (and at times collectively) they all have used triathlon practices as resistance as freedom or technologies of the self that actively have reinscribed their bodies and constructed for themselves alternative language, discourses and knowledges and truths.

It was evident from the data that the women's subjectivities are not fixed but rather come in and out of focus at different times, in different spaces and as power relations are resisted and challenged. The discourse of femininity and asymmetrical relations of power do try and constrain the woman's body. The women believed however, that they were free to choose who, and what, they wanted to be. They saw subjectivities as free-floating, not connected to an essence. I suggest that for the women in the triathlon club their subjectivities were relational to physical performativity. Women are actively positioning themselves in triathlon, choosing how to behave and consciously utilising cultural practices as resistance as freedom. Betty, Deirdre and Sharon resist the dominant discourses by consciously transforming themselves through triathlon as technologies of the self. As the youngest, growing up in contemporary feminisms, Claire seems free to choose to do what she wants –there is

no evidence to suggest that she is being constrained. The literature indicates a patriarchal power relation between men and women, coach and athlete, parent and daughter, but Claire refers to her relations with her father in terms of a partnership.

Each woman drew social worlds, which were made up from cultural currents (Bordo 1993) and cultural practices. The women describe their sense of self as deriving from multiple embodied subjectivities, which change over time and space and come in and out of focus. To be 'a triathlete' was a desired subjectivity for all the women. Triathlon featured in different sizes for individual women. The way one subjectivity relates to, and overlaps with another reflects the subtleties of each woman's social worlds. The effect of injury on some women's lives was devastating as all of their cultural currents and subjectivities overlapped. Betty, Deirdre, Tina, Sharon and Harriet were left feeling frustrated, isolated, and lonely.

Language was used both by the formally expressed discourses to construct women in triathlon (as a woman/female triathlete), and by the informally expressed discourses of the triathlon club (as a triathlete or an active triathlete).

The nature of triathlon's empowering experience that often spills over into, and influences, other subjectivities. Most of the women believe that their experiences of physicality and empowerment in triathlon give them freedom in their social worlds. The dominant discourses of performance and patriarchy in the triathlon club act as reverse resistances. Power and knowledge are constructed as asymmetrical which made the subject positioning of novices in the club an intimidating experience. My data suggests that triathlon can act as both technologies of power and as a technology of the self.

During my time in the club some of the women began consciously to counter the discourses of power. Some women such as Deirdre and Betty could be seen as operating an inside and an outside terrain. In this way the self can constantly be reinscribed. My data revealed a number of examples where the women in the study used consciously planned critical resistance to dominant discourses that surrounded them.

My findings suggest, for all the women, arduous training regimes have become normal. Striving to maintain their subjectivities in triathlon, however, causes some women to cross the line from 'training is healthy' to 'training is unhealthy'. The dominant discourses in the women's social world and the club become dangerous when they are internalised by women (and men) to the extreme, and when triathlon

practices are lived as obsessive behaviours (over training) that may have dangerous health outcomes (discourses of eating, amenorrhoea). Even cultural practices in triathlon that lead to unhealthy outcomes can operate transgressively, and, as Betty and Deirdre showed, unhealthy outcomes (such as amenorrhoea, controlled eating) can still be experienced as empowering.

The strength of the study was the way social behaviour was observed and reflected upon through long-term immersion in the setting. This provided a vast amount of rich interview data which reflected the diversity of women's lives and helped me understand the multiple meanings of women's experiences in sport.

Rich though the data may be, they may pertain only to the triathlon club studied. A weakness may have been the sheer volume of material that, as an inexperienced researcher, I accumulated over the three years. Obviously vast amounts of text become unwieldy, and, in future analysis, I may either consider using Nvivo for coding and the convenience of data retrieval.

My period of 'indwelling' (Maykut and Morehouse 1994) with the women's transcripts made me realise that I could write a great deal about each woman. The word constraint of this thesis, however, means that I can only discuss a small number of 'overlapping' themes that I have found pertinent to both theory and practice.

Further research strategies could include collaborative work with other national governing bodies of sport in a range of sports organisations. An emphasis on 'pluralities' and the multiple meanings of women's experiences would be a fertile focus. Other research could explore the connections between the construction, constraints and confirmation of *masculinities* and women's oppression (Flintoff 1997, Smart 1984, Kelly, Burton and Regan 1994) Consciousness raising and feminist praxis are aims that I will address after my PhD is completed. I intend to give my findings back to the women in 'the form of a gift' (Messner 1992 p. 181). I experienced the club going through various transitions and am now one of the longest serving members which makes my future plans for education and empowerment realistic possibilities.

Bibliography

- Abbott, P. and Wallace, C. (1997) *An Introduction to Sociology, feminist perspectives*, London, Routledge.
- Adams St. Pierre, E. (2000) 'Postructural feminism in education', *Qualitative Studies in Education* 13, 5: 477-515.
- Andrews, D. L. (2000) 'Posting up: French poststructuralism and the critical analysis of contemporary sporting culture', in J. Coakley and E. Dunning (eds.), *Handbook of Sports Studies*, London, Sage.
- Anyon J. (1994) 'The Retreat of Marxism and Socialist Feminism: Postmodern and Poststructural Theories in Education', *Curriculum Enquiry* 24 2: 116-133.
- Althusser, L. (1971) 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, New York, Monthly Review Press.
- Apple, M. (1983) 'Work, Class and Teaching', in S. Walker and L. Barton (eds.), *Gender, Class and Education*, Barcombe, Falmer Press.
- Ashton-Shaeffer, C., Gibson, H. J., Autry, C. E. and Hanson, C. S. (2001) 'Meanings of sport to adults with physical disabilities: A disability sports camp experience', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 18: 95-114.
- Baker, P. (1987) 'Doing Fieldwork in a Canadian Bank: Issues of Gender and Power', *Resources for Feminist Research* 16, 4: 45-47.
- Balsamo, A. (1991) 'Feminist Cultural Studies: An Overview', *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 24: 50-73.
- Bannet, E. T. (1989) *Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent: Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan*, Urbana. IL, University of Illinois Press.
- Bartky, S. L. (1988) 'Foucault, femininity and the modernization of patriarchal power', in I. Diamond and L. Quinby (eds.), *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*, Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- Barone, T. E. (1995) 'Persuasive writing, vigilant readings, and reconstructed characters: the paradox of trust in educational storysharing', *Qualitative Studies in Education* 8, 1: 63-74.
- Barnes, Dr. R. (1873) 'The Lumleian Lectures: The Convulsive Diseases of Women', in J. Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport*, London, Routledge.
- Barrett, M. (1991) *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Barrett, M. and Phillips, A. (1992) *Destabilising Theory, Contemporary Feminist Debates*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Barthes (1990) *The Pleasure of Text*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Baudrillard, J. (1985) 'The Ecstasy of Communication, in H. Foster (Ed.), *Postmodern Culture*, London, Pluto.
- Baudrillard, J. (1989) *America*, London, Routledge.
- Beasley, C. (1999) *What is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist theory*, London Sage.
- Beezer, A. (1992) 'Dick Hebdige, Subculture the Meaning of Style', in M. Barker and A. Beezer (eds.), *Reading into Cultural Studies*, London Routledge.
- Benhabib, S. (1995) 'Feminism and postmodernism: An uneasy alliance', in S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell and S. Fraser, *Feminist contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*, New York, Routledge.
- Berman, M. (1989) *Coming to our Senses: Body and Spirit in the Hidden History of the*

- West, New York, Simon and Schuster.
- Bhopal, K. (1995) 'Women and Feminism as subjects of Black Study: The difficulties and dilemmas of carrying out research', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 4, 2: 153-168.
- Birrell, S. and Cole, C., L. (1994) (eds.), *Women, Sport and Culture*, Leeds, Champaign.
- Birrell, S. and Richter, D. (1987) 'Is a diamond forever? Feminist transformations of Sport', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 10, 4: 395-409.
- Black, D. R. (1991). *Eating disorders among athletes*, Reston, Va.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (2001) *How to Research*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Blinde, E. (1994) 'Unequal Exchange and Exploitation in College Sport: the case of the Female Athlete', in S. Birrell and C. L. Cole (eds.), *Women, Sport and Culture*. Leeds, Champaign.
- Bologh, R. W. (1984) 'Feminist Social Theorizing and Moral Reasoning: On Difference and Dialectic', *Sociological Theory*, American Sociological Association, (eds.), San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Bordo, S. (1988) 'Feminist scepticism and the 'maleness' of philosophy', *Journal of Philosophy*, 85, 11: 619-629.
- Bordo, S. (1990) 'Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism', in L. Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, New York, Routledge.
- Bordo, S. (1993) *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*, London, University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977) 'Cultural reproduction and social reproduction', in H. Halsey and J. Karabel (eds.), *Power and Ideology in Education*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1999) *Pascaline Meditations*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Boutilier, M. A. and SanGiovanni, L. F. (1994) 'Politics, Public Policy and Title IX, Some Limitations of Liberal Feminism', in S. Birrell. and C. Cole, (eds.), *Women, Sport, and Culture*, IL, Champaign.
- Bove, P. (1990) 'Discourse', in L. Lentricchia and T. McLaughlin (eds.), *Critical terms for literary study*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Brackenridge, C. H. (1997) 'He owned me basically, Women's experience of sexual abuse in sport', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 32, 2: 115-30.
- Brackenridge, C. H. (2001) *Spoilsports: understanding and preventing sexual exploitation in sport*, London, Routledge.
- Brackenridge, C. H (2002) 'Men loving men hating women: The crisis of masculinity', in S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (eds.), *A Reader in Gender and Sport*, London, Routledge.
- Brackenridge, C. H. and Kirby, S. (1997) 'Playing safe? Assessing the risk of sexual abuse to young elite athletes', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 32, 4: 407-18.
- Brah, A. (1992) 'Difference, diversity, differentiation', in J. Donald and A. Rattansi (eds.), *Race, Culture and Difference*, London, Sage.
- British Triathlon Association. (1997a) *Tri News*, Wednesday Press Ltd, Southend-on Sea.
- British Triathlon Association. (1997b) *Do-Tri*, Wednesday Press Ltd, Southend-on Sea.
- British Triathlon Association (1998a) *Handbook for Women*, Wednesday Press Ltd, Southend-on Sea.
- British Triathlon Association (1998b) 'The Women's Committee Structure', *Tri News*,

- Spring, 32.
- British Triathlon Association (1997) *Equity Policy Statement*. Ashby de la Zouche: The British Triathlon Association.
- Brookes-Gunn, J., Warren, C. and Hamilton, D (1987). 'Differentiating pre-menstrual symptoms and syndromes', *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 48: 385-387.
- Browne, J. (1976) 'Fieldwork for Fun and Profit', in M. P. Golden, *The research Experience*, Itasca, Ill, F. E Peacock.
- Brumberg, J. J. (1988) *Fasting girls: the emergence of anorexia nervosa as a modern Disease*, Cambridge, University Press.
- Bryman, A. (1988) *Research Methods and Organization Studies*, Unwin, London.
- Buckley, T. and Gottlieb, A. (1988) 'A critical appraisal of theories of menstrual Symbolism', in T. Buckley and A. Gottlieb (eds.), *Blood Magic*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Burgess, R. G. (1984) *In the field: An Introduction to Field Research*, London, Unwin Hyman.
- Burrows, L. (1997) 'Understanding developmental discourses in physical education', in J. Wright (ed.), *Researching in physical and health education*, Wollongong, NSW, University of Wollongong.
- Butler, J. (1987) *Subjects of desire: Hegelian reflections in twentieth-century France*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London, Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1992) 'Contingent foundations: Feminism and the question of 'postmodernism'', in J. Butler and J. W. Scott (eds.), *Feminists theorise the political*, New York, Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, London, Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1995a) 'For a careful reading', in S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell and N. Fraser, *Feminist contentions: A philosophical exchange*, New York, Routledge.
- Butler, M. A. (1995b) 'Early Liberal Roots of Feminism, John Locke and the Attack on Patriarchy ', in N. Tuana and R. Tong (eds.), *Feminism and Philosophy* London, Westview Press.
- Butler, J. (1999) *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London, Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1999) *Subjects of desire: Hegelian reflections in twentieth century France*. New York, Columbia University Press. (originally published 1990)
- Butler, J. and Scott, (1992) (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political*, New York, Routledge.
- Castelnuovo, S. and Guthrie, S. R. (1998) *Feminism and the Female Body: Liberating the Amazon Within*, London, Lynne Rienner Publisers.
- Caudwell, J. (1999) 'Women's football in the United Kingdom, theorising gender and unpacking the butch lesbian image', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 23, 4: 390-402.
- Chaudhry, N. L. (1998) 'We are graceful swans who can also be crows? Hybrid identities of Pakistani Muslim women', in S. D. Dasgupta (ed.), *A patchwork shawl: Chronicles of South Asian Women in America*, Newark, NJ, Rutgers University Press.

- Chapman, G. (1997) 'Making Weight: Lightweight Rowing, technologies of power and technologies of the self: A reply to Michel Foucault', *Sociologie et Societe* 24. 1: 141-156.
- Chepyator-Thompson, J. R. and Ennis, C. (1997) 'Reproduction and resistance to the culture of femininity and masculinity in secondary school physical education', *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 68: 89-99.
- Chernin, K. (1983) *Womansize: The Tyranny of Slenderness*, London, Virago.
- Chernin, K. (1986) *Women, eating and identity*, London Women's Press.
- Cherryholmes, C. (1988) *Power and Criticism: Poststructural Investigations in Education*, New York, Teachers College Press.
- Cixous H. (1980) 'Sorties', in E. Marks and I. DeCortivron (eds.), *New French Feminisms, an anthology*, Brighton, Harvester.
- Clarke, G. (1976) *Using Auto/biography in Sports Sociology*, paper presented to the Identity Sports Sociology and Method Conference, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, July.
- Clarke, G. (1994) 'The research that dare not speak its name: doing controversial research in physical education', Conference Proceedings of the 10th Commonwealth and Scientific Congress, University of Victoria, Canada.
- Clarke, G. (1995) 'Outlaws in sport and education? Exploring the sporting and educational experiences of physical education teachers', in L. Lawrence, E. Murdoch, S. Parker (eds.), *Leisure, Sport and Education*, Eastbourne, LSA Publications.
- Clarke, G. (1997) 'Playing a part: The lives of lesbian physical education teachers'. In Clarke and B. Humberstone (eds.), *Researching women and sport*, London, Macmillan.
- Clarke, G. (1998) 'Queering the pitch and coming out to play, lesbians in physical Education and sport', *Sport, Education and Society* 3, 2: 145-60.
- Clarke, G. (2002) 'Outlaws in sport and education? Exploring the sporting and Educational experiences of physical education teachers', in S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (eds.), *A Reader in Gender and Sport*, London, Routledge.
- Clarke, J. and Humberstone, B. (1997) *Researching Women and Sport*, London, Macmillan.
- Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkley, University of California Press.
- Coakley, J. J. (1986) *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies*, St Louis, Times Mirror, Mosby College Press.
- Cole, C. L. (1991) 'Dialogues 'on' the body: Feminist cultural studies and Foucault', paper presented to the annual meeting of the *North American Society for the Sociology of Sport*, Milwaukee.
- Cole, C. L. (1993) 'Resisting the canon: Feminist cultural studies, sport, and technologies of the body', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 17: 77-97.
- Cole, C. L. (1998) 'Addiction, exercise and cyborgs: Technologies of deviant bodies.. in G. Rail (ed.), *Sport in postmodern times*, Albany, NY, State University of New York Press.
- Combs, M. R. (1982) 'By food possessed', *Women's Sports* 4, 2: 12-17
- Connell, R. (1987) *Gender and power*, St. Lenonards, New South Wales, Australia, Allen and Unwin

- Connell, R. (1995) *Masculinities*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin.
- Connell, R. (2000) *The Men and the Boys*, Sydney. Allen and Unwin.
- Cook J. A. and Forno, M. M. (eds.), (1991) *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Cornell, D. (1991) *Beyond Accommodation: Ethical Feminism: Deconstruction and the Law*, New York, Routledge.
- Costar, E. D. (1983) 'Gymnasts at risk', *International Gymnast*. 25: 58-59.
- Crenshaw, K. (1995) 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and Violence against women of color', in K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller and K. Thomas (eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that informed the Movement*, New York, New Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (1994) *Research Design. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, London, Sage.
- Cummings, D. C., Vikovic, M. M., Wall, S. R. and Fluker, M. R. (1985) 'Defects in pulstile release in normally menstruating runners', *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* 60: 810-812.
- Curtner-Smith, M., D. (2002) 'The Occupational socialization of a first-year physical education teacher with a teaching orientation', *Sport, Education and Society* 2: 73-94.
- Dabrowski, I. (1983) 'Developmental Job Patterns of Working-Class Women', *Qualitative Sociology* 6: 29-50.
- Dale (1997) 'Identity in a culture of dissection: Body, self and knowledge', in Hetherington, K. and Munro, R. *Ideas of Difference*, Oxford Blackwell.
- Dale, E., Gerlach, D. H. and Wilhite, A. L. (1979). 'Menstrual Dysfunction in Distance Runners', *Obstetrics Gynaecology* 54: 47-53.
- Davidson, A. I. (1986) Archaeology, genealogy, ethics', in D. C. Hoy (ed.), *Foucault: A critical reader*, Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.
- Davis, D. (1982) 'Women's Experience of Menopause in a Newfoundland Fishing Village', *Maturitas* 3, 4: 207-216.
- Davis, D. (1986) 'The Meaning of Menopause in a Newfoundland Fishing Village', *Medicine and Psychiatry* 10, 1: 73-94.
- Davis, D. (1992) 'Gender and Elective Surgery in a Newfoundland Fishing Village', in T. Whitehead and B. Reid (eds.), *Gender Constructs and Social Issues* Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
- Davis, D. (1994) 'Blood and Nerves Revisited: Menopause and the body Private in a Post Industrial Fishery', paper presented at *American Anthropology Association Meeting*, Atlanta, GA.
- Davis-Floyd, R. (1983) 'Pregnancy and Cultural Confusion: Contradictions in Socialization', in P. Kolenda (ed.), *Cultural Constructions of woman*, Prospect Heights, OH: Waveland Press.
- Davis-Floyd, R., E. (1987a) 'Obstetric Training as a Rite of Passage', *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1, 3: 288-318.
- Davis-Floyd, R., E. (1987b) 'The Technological Model of Birth', *Journal of American Folklore* 100, 398: 93-109.
- Davis-Floyd, R., E. (1992) *Birth as an American Rite of Passage*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Deegan, M. J. (1989) 'Having Fun Killing Time, Getting a Deal', in *American Ritual*

- Dramas: Social Rules and Cultural Meanings*, New York, Greenwood Press.
- Deem, R. (1980) *Schooling for Women's Work*, London, Routledge.
- Delamont, S. (1980) *Sex Roles and the School*, London, Methuen.
- Delmont, S. and Duffin, L. (1978) (eds.), *The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural World*, London, Crook-Helm.
- Deleuze, G. (1988) *Foucault*, London, The Athlone.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. R. Lane, (Trans.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, (Original work published in 1972).
- Derrida, J. (1973) *Speech and the Phenomena and other essays in Husserl's Theory of Signs*, Northwestern University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1974) *On Grammatology*, G. C. Spivak, (Trans.), Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, (Original work published in 1967).
- Derrida, J. (1976) *On Grammatology*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1978) *Writing and Difference*, Chicago, The university of Chicago Press.
- Descartes, R. (1993) *Discourse on method and meditations of first philosophy*, D. A. Cress, (Trans.), Indianapolis, University of Chicago Press.
- Dilorio, J. (1989) 'Feminism, Gender, and the Ethnographic Study of Sport', *Arena: The Institute for Sport and Social Analysis* 13,1: 49-60.
- Diprose, R. (1994) *The Bodies of Women: Ethics, embodiment and sexual difference*, London, Routledge.
- Donnelly, P. (1993) 'Subcultures in sport: resilience and transformation', in A. Ingham and J. Loy. (eds.), *Sport in social development: Traditions, transitions and transformations*, Champaign Human Kinetics.
- Donnelly, P. and Young, K. (1988) 'The construction and confirmation of identity in sports subcultures', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 5: 223-240.
- Dreyfus, H. and Rainbow, P. (1983) *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Drinkwater, B. L., Nilson, K., Ott, and S. Chesunt, III C. L. (1986) *Bone mineral density after resumption of menses in amenorrhoeic women*, *JAMA* 251: 380-382.
- Drinkwater, B. L., Nilson, K. and Chesunt, C. L. (1990) 'Menstrual history as a determinant of bone density in young athletes', *JAMA*. 263: 545-548.
- Drinkwater, B. C., Grimstone, S. K., Cullen, D. M. and Snow-Harter, C. M. (1995) 'ACSM position stand on osteoporosis and exercise', *Medicine and science in sport and exercise* 24, 4: i-vii.
- Duncan, M. C. (1990) 'Sports photographs and sexual difference, images of women and men in the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 7: 22-43.
- Duncan, M. C. (1994) 'The politics of women's body images and practices: Foucault the Panoptican, and *Shape* magazine', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 18: 48-65.
- Duncan, M. C. and Hasbrook, C. A. (1988) 'Denial of power in televised women's Sports', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 5: 1-21.
- Dworkin, S. L. (1981) *Pornography: men possessing women*, London Women's Press.
- Dworkin, S. L. and Messner, M. A. (2002) 'Just do ... what? Sport, bodies, gender', in S. Scruton and A. Flintoff (eds.), *Gender and Sport: A Reader*, London, Routledge.
- Eaton, M. (1986) *Justice for Women? Family Court and Social Control*, Philadelphia,

- Open University Press.
- Eisentain, Z. R. (1995) 'The Sexual Politics of the New Right. Understanding the 'Crisis of Liberalism' for the 1980s', in N. Tuana and R. Tong (eds.), *Feminism and Philosophy*, London, Westview Press.
- Elias, N. and Scotson, J. (1994) *The Established and the Outsiders*, London, Sage.
- Ellis, C. (1986) *Fisher Folk: Two Communities on Chesapeake Bay*, Lexington, KY. The University Press of Kentucky.
- English Sports Council. (1997a) *England, the sporting nation: a strategy*, London, English Sports Council.
- English Sports Council. (1997b) Term and Conditions. *Grant Aid Application*, London, English Sports Council.
- English Sports Council. (1998) *More people, more places, more medals*, London, English Sports Council.
- Ennis, C. (1999) 'A theoretical framework: The central piece of a research plan', *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 18: 129-140.
- Erdelyi, G. J. (1962) 'Gynaecological survey of female athletes', *Journal of Sports Medicine* 2: 174-179.
- Evans (1997) 'Dreams that only money can buy ...or, the shy tribe in flight from discourse', *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and culture* 1,2: 169-188.
- Faulkner, R. (1975) 'Coming of age in organisations: a comparative study of the career contingencies of musicians and hockey players', in D. W. Ball and J. W. Loy (eds.), *Sport and Social order*, Reading, MA, Addison Wesley. 521-558.
- Fee, E. (1991) 'Critiques of Modern Science: The Relationship of Feminism to Other Radical Epistemologies', in R. Bleier (ed.), *Feminist Approaches to Science*, New York, Teacher College Press.
- Fenstermaker, S. and West, C. (eds.), (2002) *Doing Gender Doing Difference: Inequality, Power and Institutional Change*, New York, Routledge.
- Ferraro, K. (1983) 'Negotiating Trouble in a Battered Women's Shelter', *Urban Life* 12. 3: 287-306.
- Fine, M. (1988) 'Sexuality, Schooling and Adolescent females: The Missing Discourse of Desire', *Harvard Educational Review* 58,1: 29-53.
- Fine, M. (1992) *Disrupted Voices: The Possibilities of Feminist Research*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press.
- Fine, M., Weis, L., Weseen, S. and Wong, L. (2000) 'For whom qualitative research? Representations and social responsibilities', in N. K. Densin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Fiske, J. (1987) *Television culture*, London, Routledge.
- Fiske, J. (1989) *Understanding popular culture*, London, Unwin Hyman.
- Flax, J. (1993) *Disputed subjects: Essays on psychoanalysis, politics and philosophy*, New York, Routledge.
- Flint, M (1975) 'The Menopause Reward or Punishment', *Psychosomatics* 16: 161-163.
- Flint, M (1982) *Anthropological Perspectives of the Menopause and Middle Age*, *Maturitas* 4: 173-180.
- Flintoff. A. (1993) 'One of the Boys? An Ethnographic Study of Gender Relations. Coeducation and Initial Teacher Training in Physical Education'. Unpublished PhD thesis. School of Education, Milton Keynes, Open University.

- Flintoff, A. (1993) 'One of the Boys? Gender Identities in Physical Education Initial Teacher Training ', in I. Siraj Blatchford, (Ed.), *Race, Gender and the Education of Teachers*, Milton Keynes, Open University.
- Flintoff, A. (1996) 'Anti-sexist practice in secondary physical education', *British Journal of Physical Education* 27, 1: 24-31.
- Flintoff, A. (1997) 'Gender relations in physical education initial teacher education, in G. Clarke and B. Humberstone (eds.), *Researching Women in Sport*, Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (1965) *Madness and Civilisation: A history of insanity in the age of Reason*, R. Howard, (trans.), New York, Vintage Books, (Original work Published 1961).
- Foucault, M. (1970) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, New York: Vintage Books, (Original work published 1966).
- Foucault, M. (1971) 'Orders discourse', R. Sawyer, (trans.). *Social Science Information*, 10, 2: 7-30.
- Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, A. M. Sheridan Smith, (trans.). London, Tavistock Publications, (Original work published 1969).
- Foucault, M. (1973) *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*, A. M. S. Smith (Trans.), New York, Vintage Books, (Original work published in 1963).
- Foucault, M. (1976) *Discipline and punish*, London, Allen Lane.
- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish, the birth of the prison*, A Sheridan (trans.), London, Tavistock Publications.
- Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1. An Introduction*, R. Hurley, (trans.), New York, Vintage Books, (originally published 1976).
- Foucault, M. (1979) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, A. Sherridan (trans.), New York, Random House, (Originally published (1975) as *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison*, Paris, Editions Gallimard),
- Foucault, M. (1979) *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, R. Hurley, (trans.), London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1980) 'Truth and Power', in C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, New York, Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. (1980) 'Truth and Power', A. Fontana and P. Pasquino, (Interviewers and trans.), in C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*, New York, Pantheon Books (Reprinted from *Microfisica del Potere*, Turin, 1977)
- Foucault, M. (1981) *The History of Sexuality, volume one: an introduction*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, (First Published 1976).
- Foucault, M. (1983) *This is not a Pipe*, J. Harkness (trans.), Berkley, University of California Press.
- Foucault, M. (1983a) 'Afterword: The subject and power ', in H. L. Dreyfuss, and P. Rabinow (eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. Chicago, The university of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1983b) 'On the genealogy of ethics: An overview of work in progress', in H. L. Dreyfuss, and P. Rabinow (eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, Chicago, The university of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1984) 'Nietzsche, Geneology. History'. in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Random House, (Originally Published in *Hommage a Jean*

- Hyppolite*, Paris, Presses de Universitaires de France).
- Foucault, M. (1984a) 'On the genealogy of ethics: An overview of work in progress', in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader, An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, New York, Pantheon Books, (Interview conducted 1983).
- Foucault, M. (1984b) 'Space, knowledge, and power', in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, New York, Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1985) *The use of pleasure*, London, Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1988) 'Technologies of the self', in L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, and P. H. Hutton (eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*, Amherst MA, University of Massachusetts Press.
- Foucault, M. (1988b) 'The ethics of care for the practice of freedom: An Interview with Michel Foucault', in J. Bernauer and D. Rasmussen (eds.), *The Final Foucault*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press.
- Foucault, M. (1990) *Politics, Philosophy, Culture, interviews and other writings, 1977-1984*, New York, Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1993) 'Space, power and knowledge', in S. During (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, New York, Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1997) *Foucault, Health and Medicine*, A. Petersen and R. Burton (eds.), London, Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1997) 'The ethics of concern of the self as practice of freedom', R. Fornet-Betancourt, H. Becker, and A Gomez-Muller, (Interviewers.), P. Aranov and D. McGrawth, (trans.), in P. Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth*, (Interview conducted 1984).
- Francis, B. (1998) *Power plays: Primary School Children's Constructions of Gender, Power, and Adult Work*, Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books.
- Francis, B. (1999a) 'An investigation of the discourses children draw on in their constructions of gender', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 29: 300-316.
- Francis, B. (1999b) 'Modernist Reductionism or Post-structuralist Relativism, can we move on? An Evaluation of the Arguments in relation to Feminist Educational Research', *Gender and Education*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 381-393
- Francis, B. (2000) *Boys, Girls, and Achievement: addressing the classroom issues*, London, Routledge Falmer.
- Francis, B. (2002) 'Relativism, Realism, and Feminism, an analysis of some theoretical tensions in research on gender identity', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 11, 1.
- Frank, B. (1991) 'Sports, looks, and a woman: What every guy needs to be masculine', paper presented to *The North American Society for the Sociology of Sport*, Milwaukee, WI.
- Frankenberg, R. (1995) 'Learning from Aids: The future of Anthropology', in A. Ahmed And C. Shore, *The future of Anthropology: Its relevance to the contemporary World*, London, The Athlone Press.
- Gard, M. and Wright, J. (2001) 'Managing uncertainty: Obesity discourses and physical education in a risk society', *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 20, 6: 535-549.
- Garner, D. M., Rosen, L. W. and Barry, D. (1998) 'Eating Disorders among Athletes', *Sport Psychiatry* 7, 4: 839-857.
- Gauntlett, D. (1998) www.theory.org.uk/ctr-but.htm, 1-5
- Gruneau, R. (1983) *Class Sport and Social Development*, Amherst, The University of

- Massachusetts Press.
- Gilroy, S. (1989) 'The EmBody-ment of power: gender and physical activity', *Leisure Studies* 8, 2: 163-171.
- Gilroy, S. (1997) 'Working on the Body: Links between Physical Activity and Social Power', in G. Clarke and B. Humberstone (eds.), *Researching Women and Sport*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Gilroy, S. and Clarke, G. (1997) Raising the Game: deconstructing the sporting text- from Major to Blair', *Journal of Sports Pedagogy* 3: 19-37).
- Ginsburg, F. (1989) *Contested Lives: The abortion Debate in an American Community*. Berkley, University of California Press.
- Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Chicago IL, Aldine.
- Goffman, E. (1976) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Harmondsworth, Aldine.
- Goldberg, R. (1983) *Organising Women Office Workers: Dissatisfaction, Consciousness and Action*, New York, Praeger.
- Golde, P. (1970) 'Odyssey of Encounter', in P. Golde (ed.), *Women in the Field: Anthropological Experiences*, Chicago, Aldine.
- Gore, J. (1995) 'Foucault's poststructuralism and observational research: A study of power relations', in R. Smith and P. Wexler (eds.), *After Postmodernism: Education, politics and identity*, London, Falmer Press.
- Gottlieb, A. (1988) 'Menstruation Cosmology among the Beng of Ivory Coast ', in T. Buckley and A. Gottlieb (eds.), *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Grace, B. (1997) 'Researching a Women's Sport Organisation', in G. Clarke and B. Humberstone (eds.), *Researching Women and Sport*, London, Macmillan.
- Graham, H. (1984) 'Surveying through stories', in C. Bell and H. Roberts (eds.), *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Q. Hoare and P. Nowell Smith (eds.), London, Lawrence and Wishart.
- Gray, J. (1995) *Liberalism*, (2nd ed.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Green, B. (1988) *Literary methods and sociological theory*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Greendorfer, S. (1993) 'Gender role stereotypes and early childhood socialisation', in G. L Cohen (ed.), *Women in Sport, Issues and Controversies*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage.
- Griffin, C. (1985) *Typical Girls?* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Griffin, P. (1992) 'Changing the Game: Homophobia, sexism and lesbians in sport', *Quest* 44,2: 251-265.
- Grimshaw, (1986) *Philosophy and Feminist Thinking*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Grosz, E. (1995) *Space, time and perversion: Essays on the politics of bodies*. New York, Routledge.
- Guardian (1999) 13th February, 'Breasts, PMT and the pill bar women from boxing'. London, Guardian.
- Guthrie, S. R. and Castelnovo, S. (2001) 'Disability management among women with physical impairments: The contribution of physical activity, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 18: 5-20.

- Hall, M. A. (1996) *Feminism and Sporting Bodies*, Illinois, Human Kinetics.
- Hall, S. and Jefferson, T. (eds.), (1976) *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subculture in Post War Britain*, London, Hutchinson.
- Halperin, D. (1995) *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, New York. Routledge.
- Hammersley, M. (1989) *The Dilemmas of Qualitative Method: Herbert Blummer and the Chicago Tradition*, London, Routledge.
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1983) (eds.), *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, London, Routledge.
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P (1989) *Ethnography: Principles in practice*, London Routledge.
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in practice*, (2nd ed.), London, Routledge.
- Harding, S. (1986) *The Science Question in Feminism*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press.
- Hargreaves, J. (1994) *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport*, London, Routledge.
- Hargreaves, J. (1997) 'Women's Sport, Development, and Cultural Diversity: The South African Experience', *Women's Studies International Forum* 20, 2: 191-220.
- Hargreaves, J. (2000) *Heroines of Sport: The politics of difference and identity*, London. Routledge
- Hartsock, N. (1990) 'Foucault on Power: A theory for women?' in L. J. Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, New York, Routledge.
- Harvey, L. (1990) *Critical Social Research*, London, Unwin Hyman.
- Hebdige, D. (1979) *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, London, Methuen.
- Heckman, S. (1987) 'The feminization of epistemology: Gender and the Social Sciences', in M. J. Faleo (ed.), *Feminism and epistemology: Approaches to research in women and Politics*, New York, Haworth Press
- Heckman, S. (1990) *Gender and knowledge: Elements of a postmodern feminism*, Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- Henderson, K. A. (1996) 'One Size Doesn't Fit All: The Meanings of Women's Leisure', *Journal of Leisure Research* 28, 3: 139-154.
- Hewitt, J. P. (1984) *Self and society: A symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology*, (3rd Edition.), Boston, Allyn and Bacon.
- Hickey, C., Fitzclarence, L. and Matthews, R. (1998) *Where boys are: Masculinity, sport and education*, Geelong, Victoria, Deakin University Press.
- Hirsch, M. and Keller E. F. (1990) (eds.), *Conflicts in Feminism*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Hochschild, A. (1978) *The Unexpected Community: Portrait of an Old-age Subculture*, Berkley, C.A, University of California Press.
- Hollingsworth, S. (1996) 'Repositioning the teacher in US schools and society ', in C. O'Hanlon (ed.), *Professional Development through Action Research in Educational Settings*, London, The Falmer Press.
- hooks, b. (1990) *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*, Boston, South End.
- Hubbard, R. (1990) *The Politics of Women's Biology*, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press.
- Hughes, C. (1997) 'Women's Forum', *Triathlon News*, (July/August).
- Hughes, C. (2002) *Key Concepts in Feminist Theory and Research*, London, Sage.

- Humberstone, B. (1986) 'Learning for a Change: A study of Gender and Schooling in Outdoor Education', in J. Evans (ed.), *PE, Sport and Schooling: Studies in the Sociology of Physical Education*, Lewes, Falmer.
- Humberstone, B. (1990) 'Warriors or Wimps? Creating Alternative Forms of Physical Education', in M. Messner and D. Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, Champaign, IL, Human Kinetics.
- Humberstone, B. (1997) 'Challenging Dominant Ideologies', in G. Clarke and B. Humberstone (eds.), *Researching Women and Sport*, London, Macmillan.
- Humphries, B. (2000) 'From Critical Thought to Action', in C. Truman and D. Mertens and B. Humphries, *Research and Inequality*, London, UCL Press.
- Hurley, L. S. and Roncraati, A. (1997). 'A profile of the female athlete triad', *Athletic Therapy Today*, March: 14-19.
- Jacobus, M., Keller, E. and Shuttleworth, S. (1990) *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*, New York, Routledge.
- Jagger, A. M. and Struhl, R. P. (1978) (eds.), *Feminist Frameworks*, New York, McGraw-Hill.
- Jameson, F. (1991) *Postmodernism or the cultural logic of late capitalism*, London, Verso.
- Jardine, A. (1985) *Gynesis: Configurations of Women and Modernity*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- Jensen, K. (1995) *The Social Science of Mass communication*, London, Sage.
- Johnson, T. M. (1987) 'Pre-menstrual Syndrome as a Western Culture-Specific Disorder', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 11: 337-356.
- Jones, S. (1985) 'Depth interviewing', in R. Walker (ed.), *Applied Qualitative Research*, Dartmouth, Aldershot.
- Jones, S. (1985b) 'The analysis of in depth interviews', in R. Walker (ed.), *Applied Qualitative Research*, Dartmouth, Aldershot.
- Jones, A. (1997) 'Teaching post-structuralist feminist theory in education: student resistances', *Gender and Education* 5: 261-269.
- Jordan, B. (1993) *Birth in Four Cultures*, Prospect Heights, IL, Waveland Press.
- Kamuf, P. (1982) 'Writing Like a Woman', in S. McConnell-Ginet (ed.), *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, New York, Praeger.
- Kaufert, P. (1990) 'Methodological Issues in Menopause research', in M. Flint, F. Kronenberg and W. Utian (eds.), 'Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Menopause', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 52: 114-123.
- Kanter, R. (1977) *Men and Women of the Corporation*, New York, Basic.
- Keen, S. (1992) *Fire in the Belly: on being a man*, London, Piakus.
- Kellner, D. (1992) 'Popular Culture and the construction of postmodern identities', in S. Lash and J. Freidman (eds.), *Modernity and Identity*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Kellner, D. (1995) *Media Culture*, London, Routledge.
- Kelly, L., Burton, S. and Regan, L. (1994) 'Researching Women's Lives or Studying Women's Oppression? Reflections of What Constitutes as Feminist Research', in M. Maynard and J. Purvis (eds.), *Researching Women's lives from a Feminist Perspective*, London, Taylor and Francis.
- Kennedy, E. (2001) 'She Wants to be a Sledgehammer?: Tennis Femininities on British Television', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 25, 1: 56-72.

- Kenway, J. and Willis, S. (1997) *Answering back: Girls, boys and Feminism in Schools*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin.
- Kerfoot, D. and Whitehead, S. (1998) 'Boys own' stuff?: Masculinity and the management of further education, *Sociology Review* 46, 3: 49-64.
- Keyworth, S. (2001) 'Critical Autobiography: 'Straightening' out dance education', *Research in Dance Education* 2, 2: 117-137.
- Kidd, W. (2002) *Culture and Identity*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Kirk, D. (1997) 'Schooling bodies for new times: The reform of school physical education in high modernity, in J., M. Fernandez-Balboa (ed.), *Postmodernism in Human Movement*, Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Kirk, D., Macdonald, D. and Tinning R. (1997) 'The social construction of pedagogic discourse in physical education teacher education', *The Curriculum Journal* 8, 2: 271-298.
- Klebanov, P. and Ruble, D. (1994) 'Mind and Pain: Towards an Understanding of Women's Experience of Menstrual Cycle Symptoms', in V. Adesso, D. Reddy and R. Flemming (eds.), *Psychological Perspectives on Women's Health*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press.
- Klein, R. (1987) 'The Dynamics of the Women's Studies Classroom: A Review Essay of the Teaching Practice of Women's Studies in Higher Education', *Women's Studies International Forum* 10: 187-206.
- Kleinman, S. (1991) 'Fieldworkers' feelings: What we feel, who we are, how we analyse', in W. Shaffir and R. Stebbins *Experiencing Fieldwork: An Inside View of Qualitative Research*, Newbury Park, Sage.
- Kondo, D. (1995) 'Poststructuralist theory as political necessity', *Amerasia Journal* 21,1 and 2: 95-100.
- Kuhn, A. (1985) *The Power of the Image, Essays on Representation and Sexuality*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Laker, A. (2002) (ed.), *The sociology of sport and physical education: an introductory Reader*, London, Routledge.
- Lather, P. (1991) *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/in the Postmodern*, New York, Routledge
- Lees, S. (1993) *Sugar and Spice*, London, Penguin.
- Leisure Futures Limited. (1998). *The British Triathlon Association Management Structure Review*, (Management Review), Dorset, Leisure Futures.
- Lasegue, E. (1873) 'On Hysterical Anorexia', *Medical Times and Gazette*, 6th September
- Lenskyj, H. (1986) *Out of bounds: Women, sport and sexuality*, Toronto, Women's Press.
- Lenskyj, H. (1994) 'Sexuality and femininity in sports contexts: issues and alternatives', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 18, 4: 356-476.
- Lenskyj, H. J. (1998) 'Inside sport' or 'on the margins'? : Australian women and the sport media, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 33, 1, 19-33.
- Levis-Strauss, C. (1966) *The Savage Mind*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Lloyd, M. (1996) 'A feminist mapping of Foucauldian politics', in S. Heckman (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault*, University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Lofland, L. (1975) 'The 'Thereness' of Women: A Selective View of Urban Sociology', in M. Millman and R. Kanter (eds.), *Another Voice: Feminist Perspectives on Social Life and Social Science*, New York, Anchor Press.

- Loy, J. and McPherson, B. and Kenyon, K. (1978) (eds.), *Sport, Culture and Society*, New York, Macmillan.
- Lyotard, J-F. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Macdonald, M. (1995) *Representing women: Myths in the popular media*. London, Edward Arnold.
- Macdonald, D., Kirk, D., Metzler, M., Nilges, L. M., Schempp, P. and Wright, J. (2002) 'Its All Very Well, in Theory: Theoretical Perspectives and Their Applications in Contemporary Pedagogical Research', *Quest* 54: 133-156.
- MacCormack, C. P. (1988) 'Health and the Social power of Women', *Social Science and Medicine* 26: 677-683.
- MacNeill, M. (1988) 'Active women, media representations, and ideology', in J. Harvey and H. Cantelon (eds.), *Not Just a Game*, Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press.
- MacSween, M. (1993) *Anorexic bodies*, Routledge, London
- Malinowski, B. (1922) *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, New York, Dutton.
- Mansfield, L. and Maguire, J. (1999) 'Active women, power relations and gendered identities: Embodied Experiences of Aerobics', in S. Roseneil and J. Seymour (eds.), *Practising Identities. Power and resistance*, London, Macmillan.
- Manfield, L. and Maguire, J. (2000) 'Women 'Working Out': An Empowering Exercise?', paper presented to *The 2000 Pre Olympic Congress. 'A Celebration of Sport, Science, Medicine, Education, and Culture in the New Millennium'*, Brisbane, Australia, 7-13th September 2000.
- Markula, P. (1995) 'Firm but shapely, fit but sexy, strong but thin: The postmodern Aerobicising female bodies', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 12: 424-533.
- Markula, P. (2000) 'I gotta do the marathon': women's running as a truth-game', *Aethlon* 18, 1: 89-106.
- Markula, P. (2001) 'Beyond the perfect body: Women's body image distortion in fitness magazine discourse', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 25: 158-179.
- Markula, P. (2003) 'The Technologies of the Self: Sport, Feminism, and Foucault', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 20: 87-107.
- Martin, E. (1987) *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*, Boston, Beacon Press.
- Martin, M. (1996) 'Issues of power in the participatory research process', in K. de Konning and M. Martin (eds.), *Participatory Research in Health*, London, Aldershot and Vermont, Avebury.
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G., B. (1989) *Designing qualitative research*, Newbury Park, Sage.
- Martin, E. (1987) *The Woman in the Body. A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*, Boston, Beacon Press.
- Martin, J. (2000) 'Hidden gendered assumptions in mainstream organizational theory and research', *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9,2: 207-216
- Martin, M. (1994) 'Developing a feminist participative research framework: evaluating the process', in B. Humphries and C. Truman (eds.), *Rethinking Social Research*, Aldershot and Vermont, Avebury.
- Martin, M. (1996) 'Issues of power in the participatory research process', in K. de Konning and M. Martin (eds.), *Participatory Research in Health*, London, Aldershot and Vermont Avebury

- Martineau, H. (1837) *Society in America*, New York, Anchor Books.
- Maudsley, H. (1874) 'Sex in Mind and Education', *Fortnightly Review*, 1: xv.
- Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research: a philosophical and practical guide*, London, Falmer Press.
- Maynard, M. (2002) 'The concept of difference', in S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (eds.), *A Reader in Gender and Sport*, London, Routledge.
- Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (1994) *Researching Women's Lives*, London, Taylor and Francis.
- McCarthy Brown, K. (1986) 'On Feminist Methodology', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 1, 2: 76-79.
- McDade, L. (1983) 'The Interweaving of Theory and Practice: Finding the Threads for a Feminist Ethnography', paper presented to the *National Women's Studies Association Conference*, Columbus, Ohio.
- McGann, P. J. and Hayes, H. E. (1991) 'One Block off Marginal Street; Capitalism, Homeless, and dehumanisation on the Streets of Boston', paper presented to *The annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Interaction*, Washington.
- McDonald, M. G. (2000) 'The marketing of the Women's National Basketball Association and the making of postfeminism', *international Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 35 (1), pp.35-47.
- McLaren, P. and Farahmanpur, R. (2000) 'Reconsidering Marx in post-Marxist times: A requiem for postmodernism', *Educational Researcher* 29, 3: 25-33.
- McNay, L. (1992) *Foucault and Feminism*, Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- McNay, L. (1994) *Foucault: A critical introduction*, Cambridge UK, Polity Press.
- McRobbie, A. (1982) 'The politics of feminist research: between talk, text and action', *Feminist Review* 12: 46-57.
- McRobbie, A. (1994) *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*, London, Routledge.
- McRobbie, A. (2000) *Feminism and Youth Culture*, (2nd Edition.), London, Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962) *Phenomenology of Perception*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Messner, M. and Sabo, D. (1990) (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, Champaign, IL, Human Kinetics.
- Messner, M. (1990) 'Men studying masculinity: Some epistemological issues in sport sociology', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 7: 136-153.
- Messner, M. (1992) *Power at Play, Sports and the Problem of Masculinity*, Boston, Beacon Press.
- Merchant, C. (1980) *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, San Francisco, Harper and Row.
- Mies, M. (1991) 'Women's research or feminist research? The debate surrounding feminist science and methodology', in M. M. Forno and J. A. Cook (eds.), *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Miller, E. A. (1986) *Street Women*, Philadelphia, PA Temple University Press.
- Miller, L. and Penz, O. (1991) 'Talking bodies. Female Body Builders Colonize a Male Preserve', *Quest* 43: 148-164.
- Millman, M. (1980) *Such a Pretty Face: Being Fat in America*, New York, W. W.

- Norton.
- Mills, S. and Pearce, L. (1996) *Feminist Readings*, New York, Prentice Hall.
- Mirza, H. (1997) *Black British Feminism; A Reader*, London, Routledge.
- Mouffe, C. (1988) Racial democracy: Modern or postmodern? in P. Holdengraber, (trans.), *Universal Abandon: The politics of postmodernism*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Muggleton, D. (2002) *Inside Subculture. The Postmodern Meaning of Style*, Oxford, Berg.
- Mulvey, L. (1981) (ed.), *The nature of matter: Wolfsan College lectures 1980*, Oxford, Clarendon Press
- Mungham, G. and Pearson, G. (1978) (eds.), *Working Class Youth Culture*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Murphy, G. M., Petitpas, A. J. and Brewer, B. W. (1996) 'Identity foreclosure, Athletic identity, and career maturity in intercollegiate athletes', *The Sports Psychologist* 10: 239-246.
- Nada, L. (1970) 'From Anguish to Exultation', in P. Cole (ed.), *Women in the Field: Anthropological Experiences*, Chicago, Aldine.
- Nasser, M. (1997) *Culture and weight consciousness*, London, Routledge.
- Nattiv, A., Agostini, R., Drinkwater, B. L. and Yeager, K. K. (1994) 'The female athlete triad: The interrelatedness of disordered eating, amenorrhoea, osteoporosis', *Clinics in Sports Medicine* 13: 405-418.
- Nauright, J. (1996) "'A Besieged Tribe?": Nostalgia, White Cultural Identity and the Role of Rugby in a Changing South Africa', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 31,1.
- Nilges, L. (1998) 'I thought only fairytales had supernatural power: A radical feminist analysis of Title IX in physical education', *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 17: 172-194.
- Nilges, L. (2000) 'A non-verbal discourse analysis of gender in undergraduate educational gymnastics sequences using Laban effort analysis', *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 19:287-310.
- Oakley, A. (1974) *The Sociology of Housework*, London, Martin Robinson Press.
- Oakley, A. (1981) 'Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms?', in H. Roberts (ed.), *Doing Feminist Research*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Oakley, A. (1982) *Subject Women*, London, Routledge.
- Obel, C. (1995) 'Collapsing gender in competitive bodybuilding: Researching contradictions and ambiguity in sport', *Review for the Sociology of Sport* 31. 2: 185-202.
- Oglesby, C. A. (1978) (ed.), *Women and Sport: From Myth to Reality*, Philadelphia, Lea and Febiger.
- Ortner, S. (1974) 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?', in M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds.), *Women, Culture and Society*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- Otis, C, L., Drinkwater, B., Johnson, M., Loucks, A. and Wilmore, J. (1997) 'American College of Sports Medicine position statement: The female athlete triad', *Medicine, Science, Sports Exercise* 29, 5: i-ix.
- Palmer, F. R. (1994) *An ethnographical study of the women's rugby subculture in New Zealand: Challenging and contributing to societal norms of femininity*,

- Unpublished Phd Dissertation, University of Otago, Dunedin.
- Pearson, K. (1979) *'The Surfing Subcultures of Australia and New Zeland'*, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press.
- Pearson, R. and Petitpas, A. (1990) 'Transitions of athletes: Development and Preventative Perspectives', *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 69: 7-10.
- Penney, D. (1998) 'Extra-curricular Physical Education: More of the same for the more able?', *Sport, Education and Society* 2,1: 41-54.
- Polsky, N. (1967) *Hustlers, beats, and others*, Chicago, Aldine.
- Powdermaker, H. (1966) *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist*, New York, Norton.
- Powdermaker, H. (1972) 'Fieldwork', in D. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, New York, Macmillan and Free Press.
- Rail, G. and Harvey, J. (1995) 'Body at work: Michel Foucault and the sociology of sport', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 18: 164-179.
- Ransom, J. (1993) 'Feminism, difference and discourse: The limits of discursive analysis for feminism', in C. Ramazanoglu (ed.), *Up against Foucault: Explorations of some of the tensions between Foucault and feminism*, London, Routledge
- Rajchman, J. (1985) *Michel Foucault: The freedom of philosophy*, New York, University of Columbia Press
- Reinharz, S. (1992) *Social Research Methods: Feminist perspectives*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Renzetti, C. and Curran, D. (1995) *Women, Men and Society*, London, Allyn and Bacon.
- Rich, A. (1980) 'Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence', in S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (eds.), *A Reader in Gender and Sport*, London, Routledge
- Riddle, S. (1989) 'Pupils, resistance and gender codes', *Gender and Education* 1: 183-196.
- Richardson, L. (1990) *Writing Strategies: reaching diverse audiences*, London, Sage.
- Rippon, C., Nash, J., Myburgh, K. H. and Noakes, T. D. (1988) 'Abnormal eating attitude test scores predict menstrual dysfunction in lean females', *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 7: 617-624.
- Roberts, K. (1999, May 30) 'TV Sport goes to extreme for teens', *The Observer*, 7.
- Rodriguez, N. M. (1988) 'Transcending Bureaucracy: Feminist Politics at a Shelter for Battered Women', *Gender and Society* 2,2: 214-227.
- Rojek, C. (2000) *Leisure and Culture*, Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Rosen, B. (1982) 'Career progress for women: Getting in and staying in', in H. J. Bernardin (ed.), *Women and the work force*, New York, Praeger.
- Rosen, B. (1991) 'Coming to terms with the field: Understanding and doing organizational ethnography', *Journal of Management studies* 28, 1: 1-24.
- Rosenau (1992) *Post-modern and the social sciences: Insights, inroads, and Intrusions*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.
- Rubinstein (1930) in M. Nasser, (1997) *Culture and weight consciousness*, London, Routledge.
- Ruzek, S. (1978) *The Women's Health Movement: Feminist Alternatives to Medical Control*, New York, Praeger.
- Ryan, M (1984) *Marxism and Deconstruction*, Baltimore, MD, John Hopkins University Press.

- Sabin, R. (1999) 'Introduction', in R. Sabin (ed.), *Punk Rock: So What?*, London, Routledge.
- Sabo, D. (1985) 'Sport, patriarchy, and the male identity, new questions about men and sport, *Arena Review* 9: 1-30.
- Sargent, C. (1989) *Maternity, Medicine, and Power: Reproductive Decisions in Urban Benin*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Sargent, C. (1992) 'Gender, Reproduction and Health Care: Comparative Perspectives', *Reviews in Anthropology* 21: 263-273.
- Sargent, C. and Brettell, C. (1996) *Gender and health: An International perspective*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.
- Saussure, F. (1916) *Course in General Linguistics*, B. Wade (trans.), London, Fontanna.
- Sawicki, J. (1991) *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, power and the body*, New York, Routledge.
- Schatzman, L. and Strauss, A. (1973) *Field Research: Strategies for a National Sociology*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall.
- Scheurich, J. (1997) *Research Method in the Post-Modern*, London, Falmer.
- Schutz, A. (1964) 'The Stranger: an essay in social psychology ', in A. Schutz (ed.), *Collected Papers*, 11, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff.
- Schwartz, D. M., Thompson, M. and Johnson, C. L. (1992) 'Anorexia nervosa and bulimia: The histo-cultural context ', *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 1: 20-36.
- Scott, M. (1968) *The racing game*, Chicago, Aldine.
- Scott J. (1988) 'Deconstructing equality-versus-difference: Or, the uses of Poststructural theory for feminism', *Feminist studies* 14,1: 33-50.
- Scraton, S. (1987) 'Boys muscle in where angels fear to tread: Girls' sub-cultures and physical activities', in J. Horne, D. Jary and A. Tomlinson (eds.), *Sport, leisure and social relations* (Sociological Review Monograph 33: 160-187) London, Routledge.
- Scraton, S. (1989) 'Shaping up to Womanhood: A study of the Relationship between Gender and Girls' PE in a City Based Education Authority', Unpublished PhD thesis, Milton Keynes, Open University.
- Scraton, S. (1994) 'The changing world of women and leisure: Feminism, 'post-feminism' and leisure', *Leisure Studies* 13, 4: 249-261.
- Scraton, S. and Flintoff, A. (1992) 'Feminist Research in Physical Education', in A. C. Sparkes (ed.), *Research in Physical Education and Sport: exploring alternative Visions*, London, Falmer Press.
- Scraton, S. and Flintoff, A. (2002) 'Sport feminism, the contribution of feminist thought to our understandings of gender and sport', in S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (eds.), *A Reader in Gender and Sport*, London, Routledge.
- Sharpe, S. (1976) *Just like a girl, how girls learn how to become women*, Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Shaw, S. and Slack, T. (2002) 'It's been like that for Donkey's Years', The Construction of Gender Relations and the Cultures of Sports Organisations', *Culture, Sport and Society* 5, 1: 86-106.
- Sherlock, J. and Swaine, I. (1995) 'The curse of overtraining: cultural processes and physiological manifestations', paper presented to *The International Congress for Sports Medicine and Social Sciences*, Gothenberg, Sweden.

- Sherlock, J. (1997a) 'Issues of Masculinity and Femininity in British Physical Education', *Women's studies International Forum*, 10, 4: 43-451.
- Sherlock, J. (1997) 'Lean, mean and feeling powerful: osteoporosis and the female Athlete', paper presented to *The British Sociological Conference, 'Body Matters'*, Edinburgh University.
- Sherlock, J. (1998) www.brunel.ac.uk?depts/sps/sosol/vli2a3.htm
- Sherlock, J. and Kennedy, E. (1999) 'Are sporting interests in girl's best interests?', in G. Pfister and L. Yueye (eds.), *Sports – the East and the West, Documentary Volume of the 3rd International ISHPES Seminar*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin.
- Shilling, C. (2003) *The Body and Social Theory*, (2nd) London, Sage Publications.
- Smart, C. (1984) *The Ties that Bind: Law, Marriage and the Reproduction of Patriarchal Relations*, London, Routledge.
- Smith, D. E. (1986) 'Institutional Ethnography: A Feminist Method', *Resources for Feminist Research*, May: 6-13.
- Smith, D. E. (1987) *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology*, Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- Smith, J. K. (1989) *The Nature of Social and Educational Inquiry*, Northwood, New Jersey, Ablex.
- Smith, D. E. (1993) *Subjectivity, identity and the body: Women's autobiographical practices in the twentieth century*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Smyth, J. and Shacklock, G. (1998) 'Behind the cleansing of socially critical research Accounts', in G. Shacklock and J. Smyth (eds.), *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research*, London, Flamer Press.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1992) *Research in Physical Education and Sport; Exploring Alternative Visions*, London, The Falmer Press.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1994) 'Research paradigms in physical education: some brief comments on differences that make a difference', *British Journal of Physical Education Research Supplement*, 14: 11-16.
- Spelman, E. V. (1988) *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, Boston, Beacon Press.
- Spender, D. (1980) *Man Made Language*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Spender, D. (1982) *Invisible Women, The schooling scandal*, London, Writers and Readers.
- Sport England. (2000) *Making English Sport Inclusive, Equity Guidelines for Governing Bodies*, London, Sport England.
- Sports Illustrated for Women* (1999) Summer Issue, Tampa, USA. Time Inc.
- Spivak, G. C. (1993). *Outside the teaching machine*, New York, Routledge.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980) *Participant Observation*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Stack, C. (1974) *All Our Kin: Strategies for survival in a Black Community*, New York, Harper and Row.
- Stacey, J. (1987) 'Sexism by a Subtler Name? Post-industrial Conditions and Postfeminist Consciousness in the Silicon Valley', *Socialist Review* 17, 1-28: 13-14).
- Stacey, J. (1988) 'Can There be a Feminist Ethnography?', *Women's Studies International Forum* 11: 21-27.
- Stacey, J. and Thorne, B. (1985) 'The Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology'.

- Social Problems*, 32, 4: 301-316.
- Stack, C. (1974) *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*, New York, Harper and Row.
- Stall, S (1983) 'Women in a Small Town: An Invisible Power Structure', paper presented to the joint *Annual Meeting of the Mid-continent American Studies Association and the North Central American Studies Association*, University of Iowa.
- Stanley, L. (1982) 'The Research Process' in the Social Sciences and its Part in Producing Discrimination against women in Higher Education', *British Society for Research in Higher Education*, Monograph on Gender Biases.
- Stanley, L. (1990) (ed.), *Feminist Praxis*, London, Routledge.
- Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1979) 'Feminist Research, Feminist Consciousness and Experience of Sexism', *Woman's Studies International Forum* 2: 359-374).
- Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) *Breaking out again: Feminist ontology and Epistemology*, London, Routledge
- Stanworth, M. (1981) *Gender and Schooling*, London, Routledge.
- Steinem, G. (1983) (Ed.), *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, New York, New American Library.
- Strauss, A. (1981) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Sundgot-Borgen, J. (1993) 'Prevalence of eating disorders in elite female athletes', *International Journal of Sports Nutrition*, 3: 29-40.
- Tandon, R. (1996) 'The historical roots and contemporary tendencies in participatory research: implications for health care', in K. de Koning and M. Martin (eds.), *Participatory Research in Health*, London, Zed Books.
- Treichler, P.A. (1990) 'Feminism, medicine and the meaning of childbirth', In M. Jacobus, E. Fox Keller, and S. Shuttleworth (eds.), *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*, New York, Routledge.
- Theberge, N. (1985) *Towards a feminist alternative to sport as a male preserve*, Champaign, Quest.
- Theberge, N. (1991) 'Reflections on the body in the sociology of sport', *Quest*, 43: 148-167.
- Thorne, S. and Varcoe, C. (1998) 'The Tyranny of Feminist Methodology in Women's Health Research', *Health Care for Women International* 19: 481-493.
- Tong R. (1998) *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction*, Boulder, CO, Westview Press.
- Truman, C., Martens, D. M. and Humphries, B. (2000) (eds.), *Research and Inequality*, London, UCL Press.
- Turner, B. S. (1984) *The Body and Society*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the field: On writing Ethnography*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Van Zoonen, L. (1992) 'The women's movement and the media: constructing a public identity', *European Journal of Communication*, 7, 4: 453-76.
- Van Zoonen, L. (1994) *Feminist Media Studies*, London, Sage
- Vereeke West, R. (1998) 'The female athlete. The triad of disordered eating, amenorrhoea and osteoporosis', *Sports medicine*, 26, 2: 63-70.
- Vertinsky, P. (1987) 'Exercise, physical capability, and the externally wounded woman

- in the late nineteenth century North America', *Journal of Sport History (Special Issue: Sport, Exercise, and American Medicine)*, 4: 7-27.
- Vertinsky, P. A. (1990) *The eternally wounded woman: Women, doctors and exercise in the late nineteenth century*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Vertinsky, P. A. (1992) 'Reclaiming Space, revisioning the body: the quest for gender sensitive physical education', *Quest*, 44: 373-396.
- Vertinsky, P. A. (1994) 'Gender relations, women's history and sports history: A decade of changing enquiry, 1983-1993', *Journal of Sports History* 21,1: 1-24.
- Wajcman, J. (1983) *Women in Control: Dilemmas of a Workers' Co-operative*, New York, St Martins Press.
- Walkerdine, V. (1990) *Schoolgirl Fictions*. London, Verso.
- Warren, M. P., Brooks-Gunn, J. and Hamilton, L. H. (1986) 'Lack of bone accretion and amenorrhoea: Evidence for a relative osteopenia in weight bearing bones', *New England Journal of Medicine*, 3,14: 1348-1353.
- Warren, C. B. and Hackney, J. K. (2000) *Gender Issues in Ethnography*, London, Sage.
- Waters, C. (1981) 'Badges of half-formed inarticulate radicalism: a critique of recent trends in the study of working class culture', *International Journal of labour and Working Class History*, 19 (Spring): 23-37.
- Webb, L. and Macdonald, D. (2000) 'Beyond dualisms: Leadership in health and physical education', *International Review of Women and Leadership* 6,2: pp.33-47).
- Webb, W. H., Nasco, S. A., Riley, S. and Hendrick, B. (1995) 'Athlete Identity and Reactions to Retirement to Sports', *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, 21, 3.
- Weedon, C. (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Weedon, C. (1997) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (2nd Edition), Oxford, Blackwell.
- Weedon, C. (1997a) *Feminist Theory and the Politics of Difference*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Weeks, J. (1990) 'The value of difference', in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community Culture, Difference*,
- Weeks, J. (1992) 'The body and sexuality', in R. Bock and K. Thompson (eds.), *Social and Cultural Forms of Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Weiner, A. (1976) *Women of Value, Men of Renown: New Perspectives, in Trobriand Exchange*, Austin, University of Texas Press.
- Wesely, J. K. (2001) 'Negotiating Gender: Bodybuilding and the natural/unnatural continuum', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 12: 164-180.
- Wheatley, E. E. (1990) '“Stylistic Ensembles” on a Different Pitch: A Comparative Analysis of Men's and Women's Rugby Songs', *Women and Language* 13, 1: 21-26.
- Wheatley, E. E. (1994) 'Subcultural subversions: comparing discourses on sexuality in men's and women's rugby songs', in S. Birrell and C. Cole (eds.), *Women, Sport and Culture*, Champaign, IL, Human Kinetics.
- Wheaton, B. and Tomlinson, A. (1998) 'The Changing Order of Gender Order in Sport? The case of windsurfing Subcultures', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 22, 3: 252-274).
- White, K. (2002) *An Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness*, London, Sage.
- White, H. (1978) 'Foucault decoded Notes from the underground', in *Topics of discourse: essays in cultural criticism*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University

- Press.
- Whitehead, S. M. (2002) *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Whitson, D. (1984) 'Sport and Hegemony: On Construction of the Dominant Culture', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 1: 64-78.
- Whitson, D. (1990) 'Sport in the social construction of masculinity', in M. A. Messner and D. F. Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, Champaign, Human Kinetics.
- Whitson, D. (2002) 'The Embodiment of gender', in S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (eds.), *Gender and Sport: A Reader*, London, Routledge.
- Williams, R. (1993) 'Race deconstruction, and the emergent agenda of feminist economic Theory', in J. Bornat, C. Pilgrim, and F. Williams (ed.), *Community Care: A Reader*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Open University.
- Willis, P. (1978) *Profane Culture*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Willis, P. (1982) 'Women in Sport in Ideology', in J. Hargreaves (ed.), *Sport, Culture and Ideology*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Willis, P. (2000) *The Ethnographic Imagination*, Cambridge, Polity.
- Willis, P. and Trondman, M. (2000) 'Manifesto for Ethnography', *Ethnography* 1: 5-16.
- Woodward, C. (2000) 'Hearing Voices? Research issues when telling respondents' stories of childhood abuse from a feminist perspective', in C. Truman, D. Martens and B. Humphries (eds.), *Research and Inequality*, London, UCL Press.
- Women's Triathlon Committee.(1986) *The Women's Committee: Facts and Figures and a little bit more*, London, Women's Committee.
- Women's Sports Foundation (1994) *The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport*. Brighton, Sports Council.
- Wooley, O. W., Wooley, S. C. and Dyrenforth, S. R. (1979) 'Obesity and women II; a neglected feminist topic', *Women Studies International Quarterly* 2: 81-89.
- Women's Sports Foundation (1994) *The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport*, Brighton, Sports Council.
- Wright, J. (1995) 'A Feminist Poststructuralist methodology for the study of gender construction in physical education: Description of a case study', *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 15: 1-24.
- Wright, J. (1996) 'Mapping the discourses in physical education', *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 28: 331-351.
- Wright, J. (2000a) 'Disciplining the body: Power, knowledge and subjectivity in a physical education lesson', in A. Lee and C. Poynton (eds.), *Culture and text*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin.
- Wright, J. (2000b) 'Bodies, meanings and movement: A comparison of the language of a physical education lesson and a Feldenkrais movement class', *Sport, Education and Society* 5: 35-49.
- Wright, J., Macdonald, D. and Wyn J. (2001) *Physical activity in the lives of young People*, Funded project through the Australian Research Council, Canberra.
- Young, I. (1980) 'Throwing like a girl: a Phenomenology of the feminine body. Comportment, mortality and spatiality', *Human Studies* 3: 137-156.
- Yount, K. R. (1991) 'Ladies, Flirts and Tomboys: Strategies for Managing Sexual Harassment in an Underground Coal mine', *Journal of Contemporary*

Ethnography 19, 4:396-422).

Zucker, P., Avenier, J., Bayder, S., Brotman, A., Moore, K. and Zimmerman, J.
(1985) 'Eating disorders in young athletes'. *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*
13, 11: 88-106.

Appendix 1:
Informed consent form

'From subcultures to social worlds: women in sport women in triathlon' is a PhD study registered at De Montfort University, Bedford.

Researcher: Amanda Jones
Supervisors: Dr Joyce Sherlock
Dr Dawn Penney

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Please take a few minutes to read the following and to ask any questions. If you are in agreement then please then sign below.

I agree to participate in the above research project being conducted by Amanda Jones entitled 'From subcultures to social worlds: women in sport women in triathlon'. I agree to be interviewed by the researcher and understand that the interviews will be recorded and the interviews transcribed.

I also understand that:

- All information that I provide will be treated with respect and stored in a safe place at De Montfort University.
- I may withdraw from the study at any point and, in this case any data that I have already provided will not be used by the researcher.
- I will be provided with a copy of the transcript which I can check for authenticity

Signed (participant) Date.....

Signed (researcher) Date.....

Appendix 2

Club E-group circulation

AGM 2001

The new committee for 2001 has now been confirmed as listed below:

Chair: Sandy Bruce

Treasurer: Tom Reim

Secretary: Lee & Mary White

Social Secretary: Louise Smith

Newsletter Editor; Paul Fin

Publicity Officer: Stuart How

Website Editor: Gordon Nine

Women's Rep: Tina Jones

Youth Development: Vince Yen

New Members Rep: Dee Broom

Kt Person: Cath Ker

Club Captain: Trevor Cutee

Race Committees

Avon Triathlon: Sean (Chair), Gary, Jon, Dee Broom, **Louise Smith** and Stan.

Sunrise Duathlon: Sean (Chair), Andy, **Tracy Fall, Louise Smith** and Stan

12 individual positions 2 race committees

The Club Committee 2000

Chair	Stan Harris
Treasurer	Tom Reim
Secretary	Lee & Mary White
Social Sec	Sandy Bruce
Newsletter Editor	Colin Toi
Publicity Officer	Cath Ker
Website Editor:	Mat Lark
Women's Rep:	Tina Jones
Youth Development:	Fortumn
New members rep:	Louise Smith
Kit person:	Lee Hill
Club Captain:	Tom Reim
Training day co-ordination:	Ced Tern
Race organisation:	Stan Harris, Jane Mann, Pat, Pete, Jon

13 individual Positions 1 race committee

The Club Committee 1999

Chairman	Stan Harris
Secretary	Harriet
Treasurer	Tom Reim
Social Rep.	Chris Man
Publicity Officer;	FrankNew
Newsletter Editor:	Harriet Fern
Youth Development Officer:	Harry Francis
Women's Rep:	Martha Firth
Web Site Editor:	Dan Grey

12 Individual positions 1 Race committee

The Club Committee 1998

Chairman: Stan Harris

Secretary: Harriet Fern

Treasurer: Tom Reim

Social Rep: Chris Man

Publicity Officer: FrankNew

Newsletter Editor: Harriet Fern

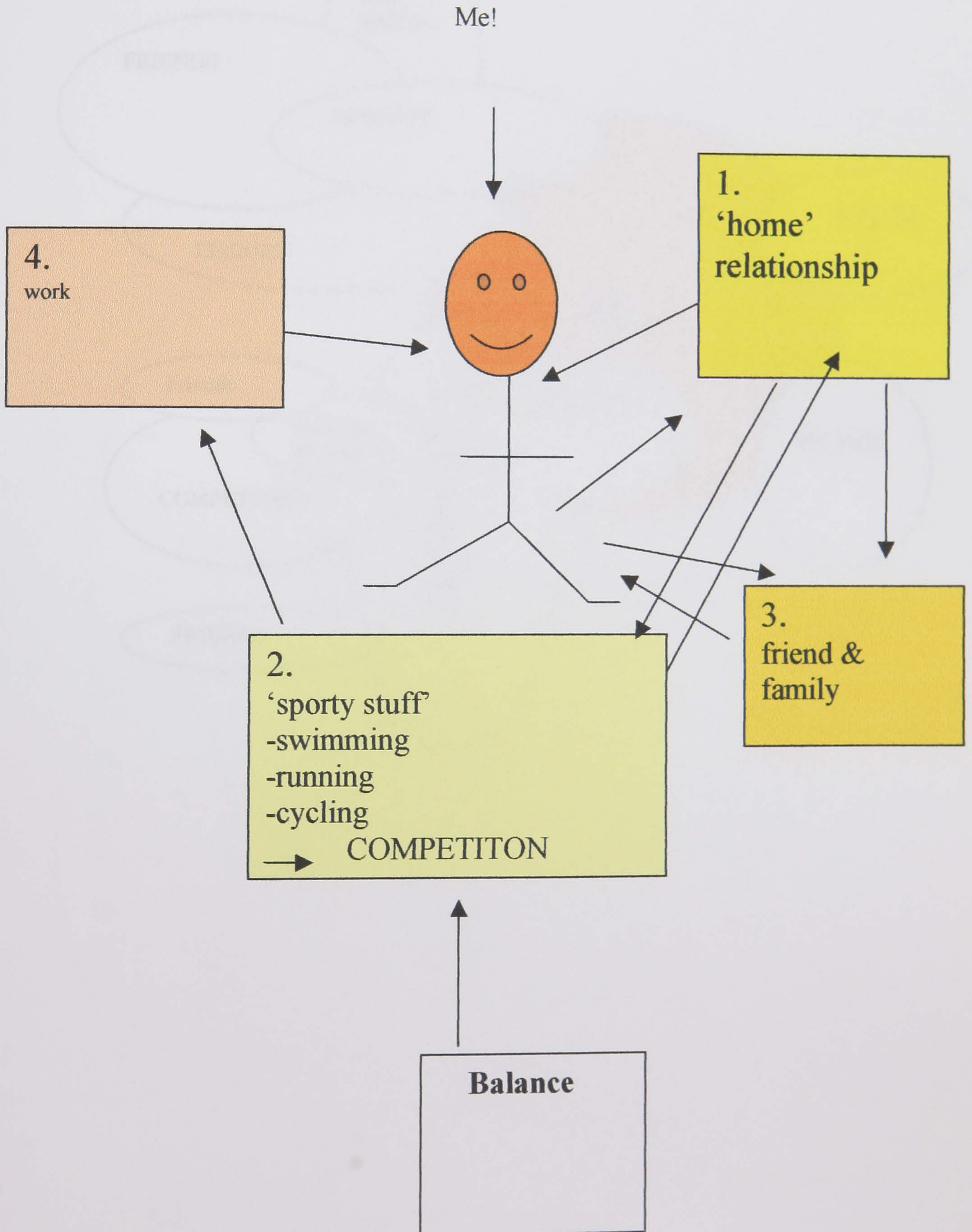
6 Individual Positions

Appendix 3

Sandy

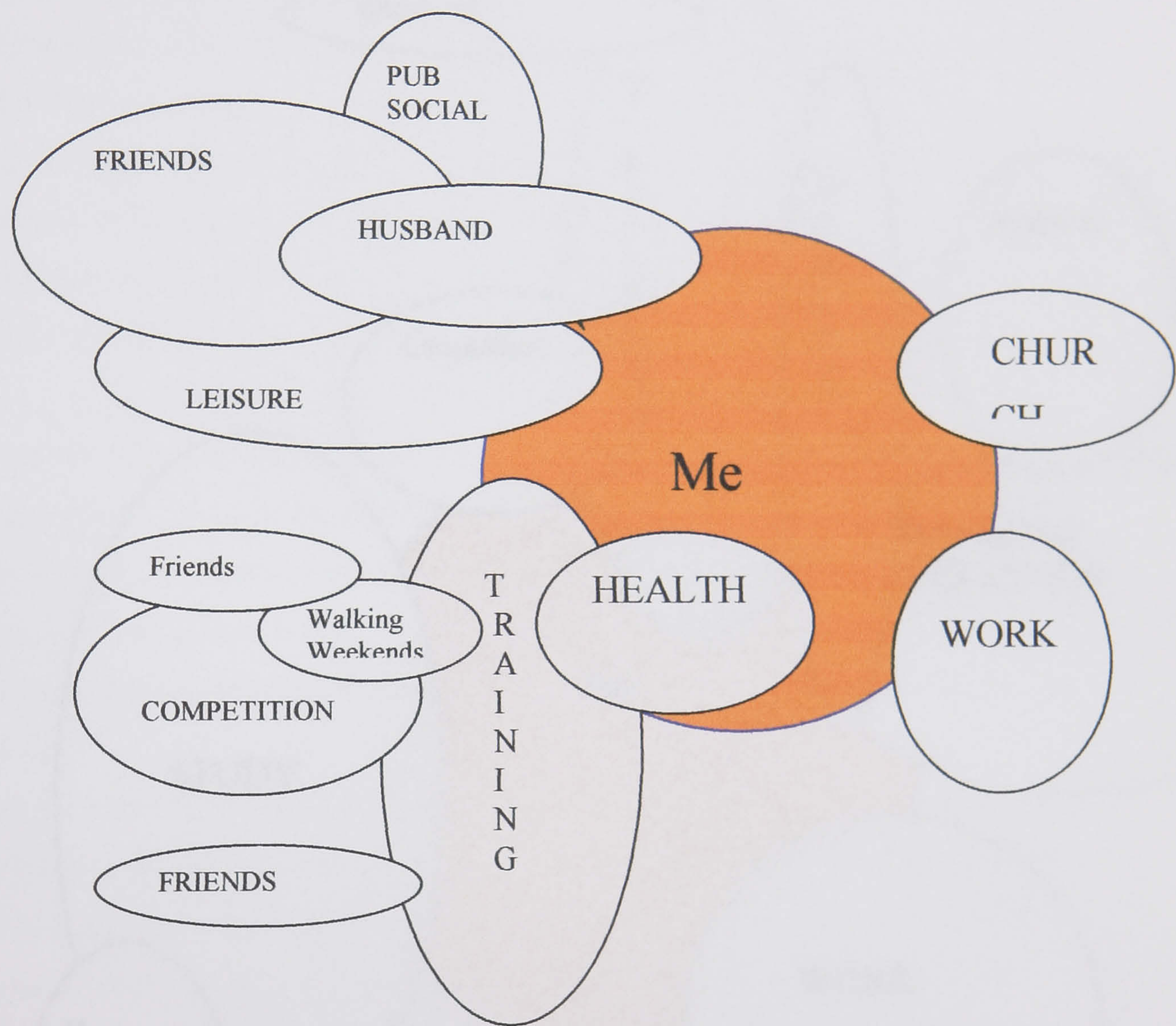
My social world April 2000

Priority 1, 2 etc.

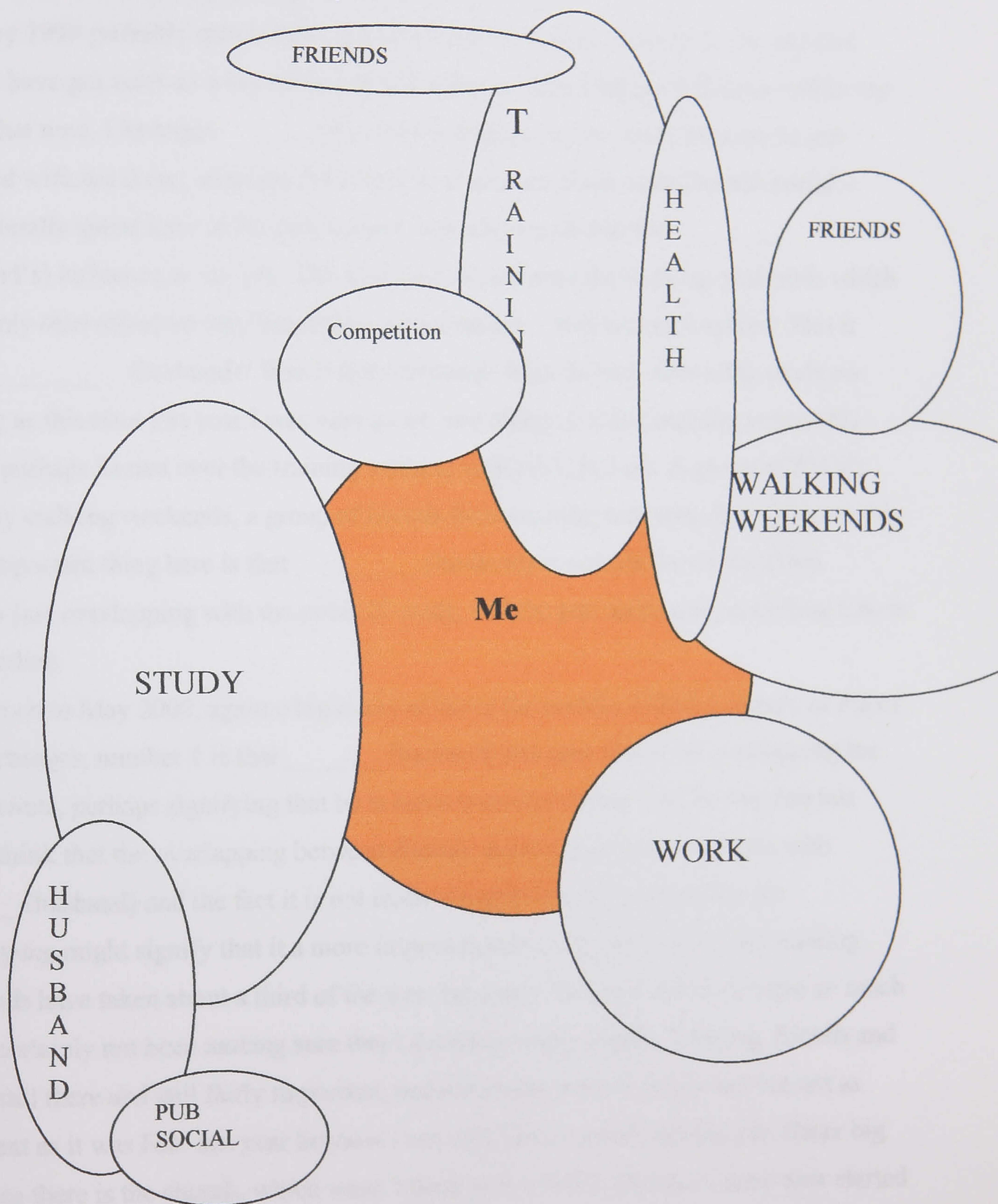


My social world Martha May 2000

Appendix 4



My social world – Martha February 1999



Martha's verbal explanation of her social world(s)

February 1999 probably quite a low part of my life as it were certainly in the last five years, I have got work as a big influence and study as even a bigger influence within my life at that time, I have got _____ (Husband) overlapping the study because he got involved with me there; certainly did spend time with me there, and also pub social – we'd literally spend time in the pub socially and very much that was _____ (husband's) influence in my life. The other big circles were the walking weekends which I certainly *then* relied on very heavily to almost escape – was it from London? Was it from _____ (husband)? Was it from training? Who knows! Also a big circle on training as this time last year I was very much into doing as much training as possible. Health perhaps leaned over the training walking weekends and me. A group of friends from my walking weekends, a group of friends from training, and very much that was it. Most important thing here is that _____ (husband) is outside the circle of me literally just overlapping with the circle of study, and the pub scene and everything else is independent.

Moving on to May 2000, again a big circle of me in the middle, I think a couple of major major changes, number 1 is that _____ (husband) has now moved in overlapping the centre circle, perhaps signifying that he is more important to me than he was Feb last year. I think that the overlapping between friends, leisure, and pub social also with _____ (husband) and the fact it is not really a bigger circle, but certainly the *overlapping* might signify that it a more important part of my life again. The walking weekends have taken about a third of the size, because I have not relied on them so much I have certainly not been *making* sure that I get away every month. Training, friends and health still there and still fairly important, and obviously work is important but not as important as it was Feb. last year because I am a bit more settled into the job. Other big influence there is the church, which wasn't there in Feb 1999, because I have now started going back to mass, again quite recently and that has probably, I don't know that it has led me back to _____ (Husband) but certainly I feel it has given me more peace and more calmness from within, and I think that is separate from the training, I think that its

just completely separate it is more coming from the social, from the external side than coming from within. And that is it!

Appendix 5

My social world Paula

First of all I will talk aboutthis is about around the time 1986/87 what was going on in my life. It is basically a bit of a mountain really and I am perched on the top on one leg and represents a crisis point in my life I was at university and my relationships were not going very well, anyway I have got a plus side on the left and a minus side on the right because basically all the minus sides were pushing me off the mountain and all the plus sides were actually drawing me up sort of keeping me from falling off the mountain. On the negative sides it was like my issues cos of being a student – drinking lots and a break-up of a relationship, and on the positive side which was keeping me sane was a group of friends and my sport which was probably my *only* comfort at the time and it was *extremely* important and it was my only positive thing I was doing quite well in that (although I was drinking to much!) and stuff like that so that is really that time,

Right this is dated 25th July and this pretty much represents where I am at now, and I feel quite ‘complete’ really so rounded and I was trying to sort of inter link everything and on one side while there are two distinct areas of life one’s home and one is work, and there are certain things that fall under one thing that another, so work is more ‘status’, home – ‘contentment and love’ and sport is more sort of slotted into the home bit which is definitely more sport and fun. Exercise is *social* and work side is more competitiveness cos I *am* quite competitive but I have decreased my competitiveness in sport as I have got older I think – it takes me quite a while to get the adrenaline buzz off sport now compared to what it was when I was younger, um so it is much more for a ‘lifestyle’ issue than it used to be it was much more competitive I think when I was younger. So that is really it! I hope that makes sense!

Appendix 6

Harriet's social world

1995- 1996

Most important

Training and racing- would train as much as possible, where and when I could.

Less Important

John- would have to train before I went and saw him!

Didn't really think much about

Friends and family- friends got in the way of training, didn't have much of a social life due to being knackered all the time.

University- only had 8 hours a week of lectures- got away with the bare minimum!

Health- would train even with a cold or the flu

Priorities

1. Winning
2. Training and racing
3. John
4. Family
5. Friends and social life
6. University

I think that in this time slot I was very self centred and independent- I was more concerned with my training than anything else. Over the years as work has come into the equation I have 'grown up' and had to realise my priorities- especially of my friends and family. I think that a major factor in training now being so low on my list of priorities is that fact that I had to start work and then my health started to go down hill (this year so far I have had 4 chest infections). Whilst not being able to train I saw a lot more of my friends and family and enjoyed going out and having a social life!

1.

1999- present day

Most important

Friends and Family (including social life)- various probs. going on in the Quay household that need to be sorted.

Health- Have had to learn that training when ill doesn't benefit you at all and that you are better off leaving the training for a few days therefore recovering quicker.

Work- Takes up a lot of time but very enjoyable.

Less Important

Cats- they need me!

Training and racing- have now realised that it is not the end of the world if I don't train and that there are far more important things to do (this might have something to do with the fact that my health has not been good so I am finding it hard to train).

Didn't really think much about

Priorities

2. Friends and Family

3. Enjoyment of life

4. Work

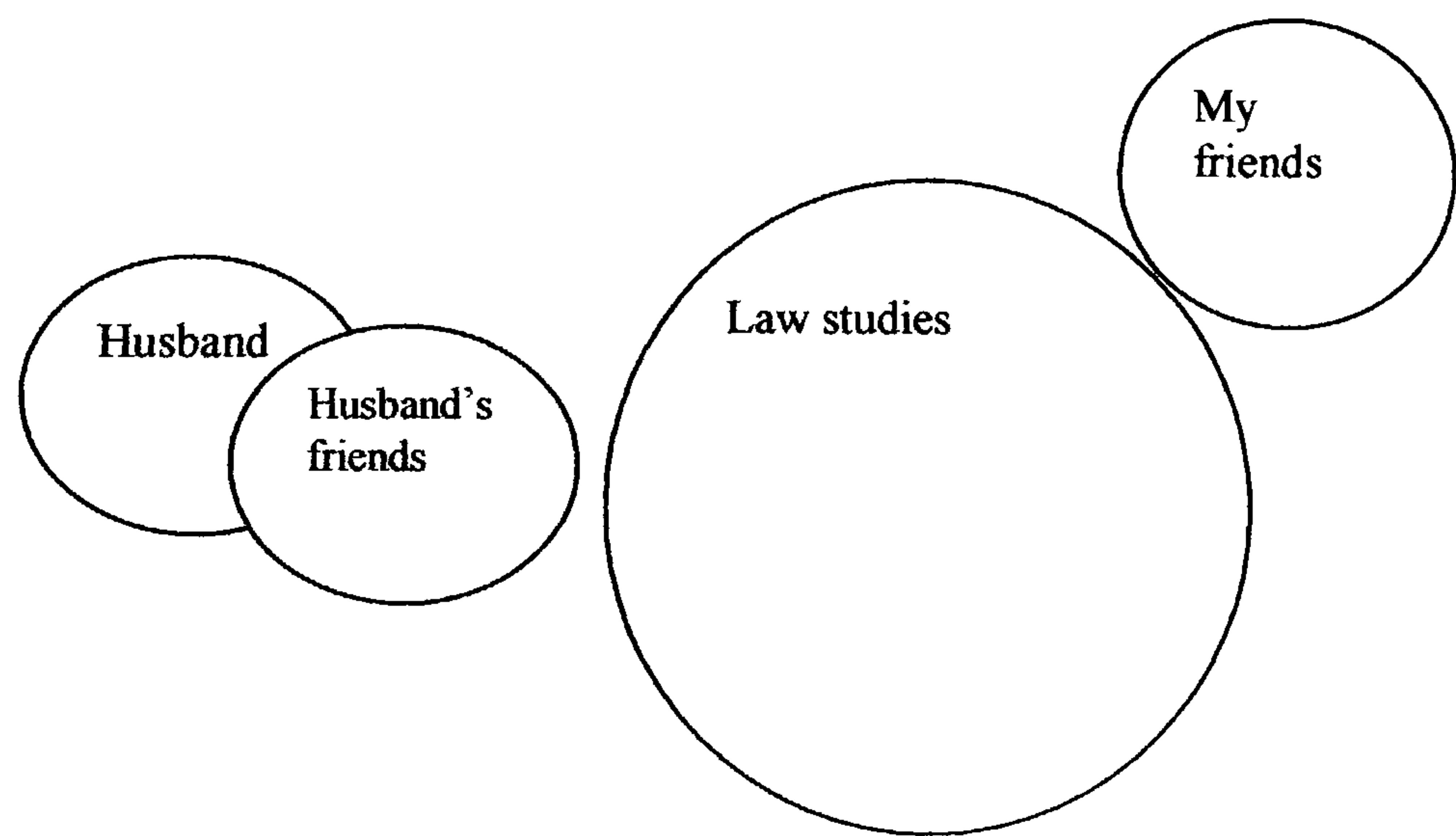
5. Health

6. Cats

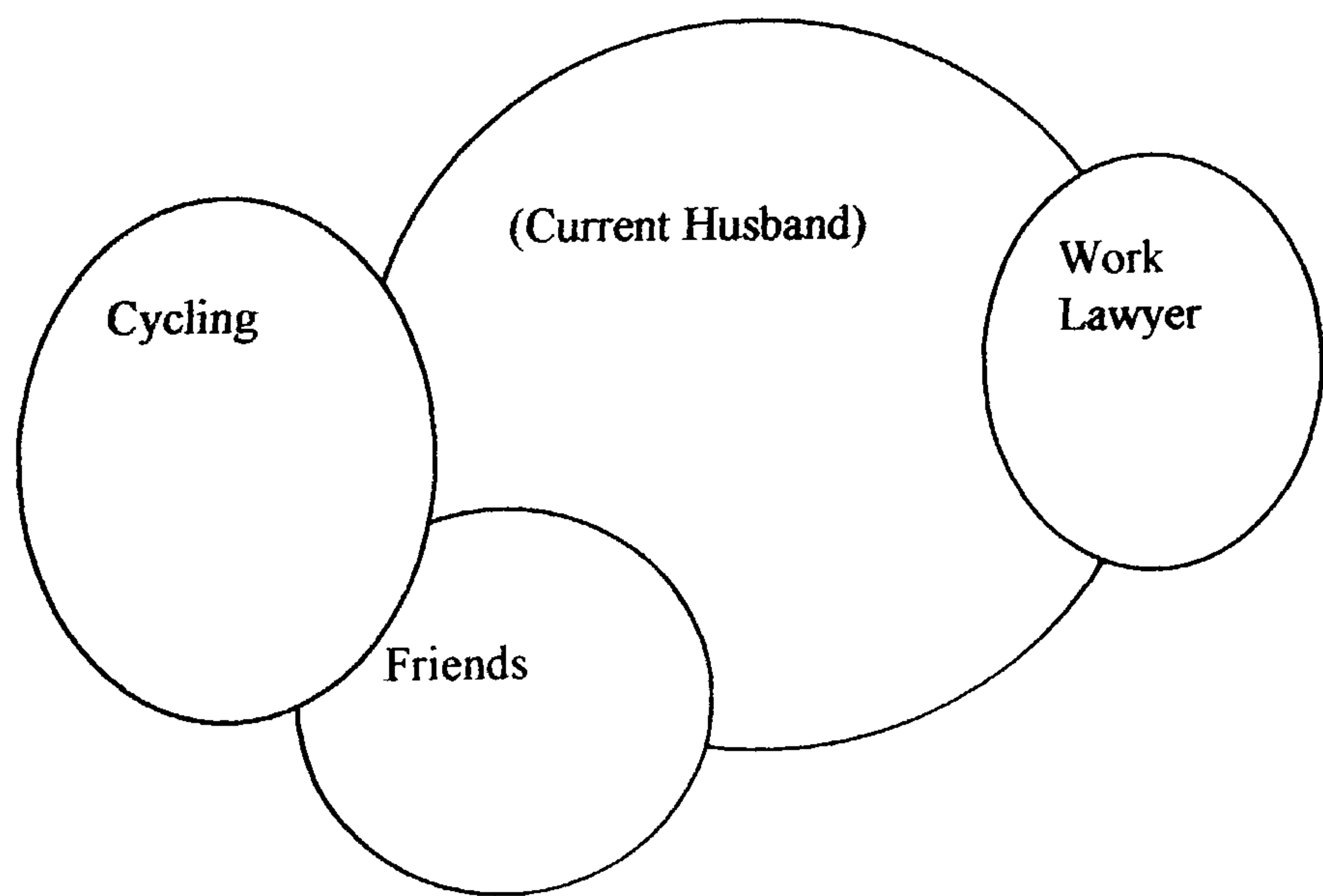
Training and racing

Appendix 7

**Jackie’s social world(s)
(with husband 2)**



1999 with husband 3



Appendix 8

Individual subjectivities

